This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

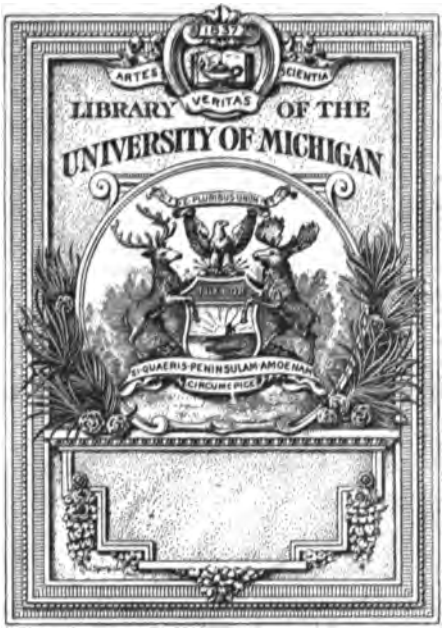
B 953,300

Poet Lore Plays

JOHN HERKNER

ERNEST ROSNER

Richard G. Badger, Publisher, Boston


ARTES
VERITAS
SCIENTIA
LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
E PLURIBUS UNUM
TUEBOR
SI QUAERIS PENINSULAM AMOENAM
CIRCUMSPICE

PLL
P
K

1837
ARTES
VERITAS
SCIENTIA
LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
TUEBOR
SI QUAERIS PENINSULAM AMOENAM
CIRCUMSPICE

82
P.
10

from ceiling to floor; this curtain is drawn back on both sides. Right, two doors, the first leading to* ALBRECHT'S *bedroom, the second, to a dressing-room for his models. Left, in front, the door into the entrance hall; further back, a window with a carefully drawn sash curtain well covered with a close pattern. Right and back, an American stove with a very hot fire in it. Between the two doors, against the wall, a little, old harmonium. On it a Bible and three blooming myrtles all the same height. Near it, on a beautiful pedestal, a medium-sized plaster cast of Rodin's group, 'The Kiss.' Right, in front, standing out in the room, a couch with rugs, skins, and cushions. Beside this, a plain wooden table, different kinds of chairs, an unused and dust-covered writing-desk. On the walls, reliefs, sketches, posters, drawings, mostly fastened only with thumb tacks. The impression of the whole is one of careless, artistic caprice, seldom unjustifiable, never without taste. In the place of order and painful cleanliness there is a general harmony, and in all there is character.*

The studio proper, which is considerably higher, has the customary high window at the back, the lower part darkened by green curtains. Through the upper part are seen snow-covered tree tops and the glow of an early winter twilight. The walls are done in Pompeiian red, on a high shelf running round the room are a number of larger and smaller figures, groups, and busts, among them vases and jugs. Hanging on the walls are plaster masks and casts of arms and legs. In a corner, towering above everything else, a bronze statue of Lucifer triumphant, with widespread wings. A stationary wash-stand with water; near it, a rack with towels and linen working blouses. Table with implements, tools, a flower syringe, and a camera. Under the table, on the floor, water buckets, wooden troughs with clay and a pile of wet gray rags. A smaller revolving table with the figure of a nude man repeated over and over as seen from different sides and a jointed puppet.

In the foreground of the studio, pushed clear over to the right, a larger revolving table, on it a life-size group in clay, almost completed. Out of the top of a rock rises the wholly nude figure of a girl with both arms raised as if flinging herself upward. Stretched before her on both knees a naked youth who clasps her in his arms, his head thrown back with a passionate gesture, his face upturned toward hers.)

ALBRECHT *is at work on the body of the feminine figure. In his working blouse the modelling tool in his hand, at once absorbed and excited. Somewhat over thirty, very tall, very strong, with dark brown, slightly curly hair and beard, dark blue, dangerous, observing eyes, which even when they smile do not lose a certain severity of expression.*

*Right and left of the spectator.

To the left, diagonally opposite him, is placed the rather high platform for the model, with several steps leading up to it.)

MIRIAM (*is on the point of coming down from the platform. With her arms turned backward, she is trying to fasten a low-necked, shirt-like garment with long, flowing sleeves, which has been thrown over her naked body. She sinks down on the bottom step in utter exhaustion, shivers as she rubs her naked feet together, rubs her arms, and finally, with a sigh of weariness, props her head up with her hands. Looks over at* ALBRECHT *and says in a low, beseeching tone*).—Albrecht!

Albrecht (*curtly and impatiently*).— What?

Miriam.— I am so tired, Albrecht. And I don't feel well.

Albrecht (*going on with his work*).— In a minute.

(*Pause*)

Miriam (*who has closed her eyes*).— Can't you get me a glass of water?

Albrecht.— Yes, certainly — in a minute! (*Stepping back a little from his work.*) It's coming—the devil take me if it isn't! (*Returning to his work.*)

Miriam.— Oh dear, I am so dizzy! (*She opens her eyes, but closes them again immediately and with a deep sigh sinks back fainting, her head on the top step.*)

Albrecht (*lays down his tools, wipes his hands off a little on a towel*).— There—that'll do for to-day. Now, what is it? (*Sees the fainting girl.*) Mira! little girl! (*Springs toward her, takes in at a glance the outstretched figure.*) Great heavens, but that is beautiful! I must have that! Where is — where have I —— (*seizes the camera, gets it in position and snaps it.*) There! And now —(*Takes the flower syringe and squeezes it over* MIRIAM'S *forehead. Shuddering and frightened, she moves a little. He lifts her half up.*) That helps you! That wakens you up! Stupid little thing! Stupid little goose!

Miriam (*sitting up, groans*).— Ugh — how cold! How wet!

Albrecht (*takes a towel and rubs her dry*).— Yes,— water is wet. But now you are dry again. And now you are warm again. Come here, you glass child! You withered rose leaf! You, my colleen dhu! (*Has taken her up in his arms and carried her over to the couch.*) A cover — and a skin — and another cover — now be quiet, you squirrel! (*He stuffs cushions under her head and back.*)

Miriam.— Not the blue one,— the pink one. That's more becoming.

Albrecht.— Oh, the vain hussy! So, after all, you are not so ill? I told you so; before she is laid in her coffin she'll take a quick look in the mirror.

Miriam.— Perhaps I shall.

Albrecht.— Is the princess content now?

Miriam.— No. Something bothers me.

Albrecht.— Well, what is it? Where is it?

Miriam.— Under the pillow — under the rug — under the floor — a pea.

Albrecht (*falls on her and smothers her with kisses*).— Wretch. Rascal! Miserable! In all Paris there was no one worse than you — no one who led me around by a nose ring — made me dance — not one!

Miriam.— Ouch! Ouch! My ears — my hair ——

Albrecht (*holding her down on the cushions with both hands and flashing a look from his eyes, half laughing, half threatening*).— One movement and your bones will be broken. I can do it. Shall I?

Miriam.— Do it.

Albrecht (*frees her and laughs good naturedly*).—What courage! Because she knows that I'm not in earnest.

Miriam (*mimicking him*).— What courage! Because he knows that he can't get another such a model.

Albrecht.— Don't be a makin' me laugh! Certainly, not one who would faint so prettily.

Miriam (*defending herself zealously*).— That was because it was too long to-day. Over an hour. No human being could stand that — even if she is a stupid little goose, as you say. In that position, too. Try it yourself. I often shut my teeth tight together with the pain and think I can't stand it another minute. And still I do stand it. Who else would do it for you? Not red Toni, and most certainly not Luigia.

Albrecht (*bowing to her*).— But then I don't love them.

Miriam.— Or — they don't love you. Well, do praise me a little. A very little bit! How am I going to do it unless I know that I am the only one who can do it?

Albrecht (*laying his hand on her head*).— You are the only one, Miriam.

Miriam.— And your whole life depends on it, on just this work?

Albrecht.— Life — my artistic — perhaps ——

Miriam.— And without me it is not possible? Say so, do say so!

Albrecht.— It is not possible without you.

Miriam (*nestles her cheek in his hand, blissfully content*).— Dear hand! Dear rough hand!

Albrecht.— Regular mason's hands!

Miriam (*looks at them*).— And dirty! And the nails!

Albrecht.—You're right. Again to-day I rolled the clay mostly with my fingers. (*He has drawn the curtains together.*) Later, I'll have a grand washing up. But first, a cigarette. (*Sits down near her and lights his cigarette.*)

Miriam.— How late is it, Albrecht? Must I go upstairs now?

Albrecht.— It has just struck the half hour.

Miriam.— But you would better look at your watch.

Albrecht.— I can't. I haven't it.

Miriam.— Your beautiful watch? Your souvenir watch from Rodin?

Albrecht.— I have only lent it. To Sieg. For the banquet.

Miriam.— Oh, yes! Why aren't you there?

Albrecht.— I prefer to gobble my potatoes alone.

Miriam.— But all the rich people! And those rich in influence! The director of the Art Museum* will be there. Reder is certainly there and will fish for a commission for the new museum for himself.

Albrecht.— He can do even less than I.

Miriam.— But he can make more money, you poverty-stricken simpleton.

Albrecht.— What's that? Yesterday I got five hundred dollars for the last cast of Lucifer. Poverty stricken? To-morrow I'll go and buy you a pearl necklace, with pearls as even as your teeth and with a diamond clasp as sparkling as your eyes.

Miriam.— Not one little wax pearl! Not one little rhinestone will I let you get! Have you paid your house rent?

Albrecht.— That won't run away from me. Oh, you women, you penny souls! Not to count the cost, to be wildly extravagant, to indulge in unprecedented excesses — in a cloudburst of marvels — that's what you can't do.

Miriam.— Indeed?

Albrecht.— Dear, no! You, now. You — well, of course. And something like that is what happens to me, ass that I am! That I wanted to is, of course, natural. But that I accomplished it — do you think I know how it came about? Do you think I know who brought it about?

Miriam (*points with her forefinger at both his eyes*).— These, here! They brought it about. These blue — dangerous, dreadful things. They look one through and through. Burn one through and through. (*Takes his head between her two hands.*) Eyes like these God must have had — when He was young — if there is a God. And yet, they don't know everything. And yet, they don't see everything.

Albrecht.— Ah! What notions don't you be havin' in your head!

Miriam.— Don't laugh! You are blind, on one side, blind as a mole. An artist like you! A merciless person like you! For I can see how you wear yourself out — wrestle — it is torturing sometimes to watch

**Kultus Minister*, literally, Minister of Education or the Arts.

Albrecht.— Is the princess content now?

Miriam.— No. Something bothers me.

Albrecht.— Well, what is it? Where is it?

Miriam.— Under the pillow — under the rug — under the floor — a pea.

Albrecht (*falls on her and smothers her with kisses*).— Wretch. Rascal! Miserable! In all Paris there was no one worse than you — no one who led me around by a nose ring — made me dance — not one!

Miriam.— Ouch! Ouch! My ears — my hair ——

Albrecht (*holding her down on the cushions with both hands and flashing a look from his eyes, half laughing, half threatening*).— One movement and your bones will be broken. I can do it. Shall I?

Miriam.— Do it.

Albrecht (*frees her and laughs good naturedly*).—What courage! Because she knows that I'm not in earnest.

Miriam (*mimicking him*).— What courage! Because he knows that he can't get another such a model.

Albrecht.— Don't be a makin' me laugh! Certainly, not one who would faint so prettily.

Miriam (*defending herself zealously*).— That was because it was too long to-day. Over an hour. No human being could stand that — even if she is a stupid little goose, as you say. In that position, too. Try it yourself. I often shut my teeth tight together with the pain and think I can't stand it another minute. And still I do stand it. Who else would do it for you? Not red Toni, and most certainly not Luigia.

Albrecht (*bowing to her*).— But then I don't love them.

Miriam.— Or — they don't love you. Well, do praise me a little. A very little bit! How am I going to do it unless I know that I am the only one who can do it?

Albrecht (*laying his hand on her head*).— You are the only one, Miriam.

Miriam.— And your whole life depends on it, on just this work?

Albrecht.— Life — my artistic — perhaps ——

Miriam.— And without me it is not possible? Say so, do say so!

Albrecht.— It is not possible without you.

Miriam (*nestles her cheek in his hand, blissfully content*).— Dear hand! Dear rough hand!

Albrecht.— Regular mason's hands!

Miriam (*looks at them*).— And dirty! And the nails!

Albrecht.—You're right. Again to-day I rolled the clay mostly with my fingers. (*He has drawn the curtains together.*) Later, I'll have a grand washing up. But first, a cigarette. (*Sits down near her and lights his cigarette.*)

songs! Oh, if only I could talk a dialect. Any dialect at all. It is so homelike. And I have never been at home anywhere. Always on the go, from one city to another, out of one strange place into another strange place. There is nothing for a child in that kind of a life. One never grows to be like other people in that way.

Albrecht.— And that's the best thing one can do.

Miriam (*starting*).— Sh — was that the house door?

Albrecht (*frees her, listens at the entrance*).— Nothing. Nobody. Did you lock the door upstairs — the door to your room?

Miriam (*nods*).

Albrecht.— Then what can happen to us? No one can come in here and no one upstairs. There is no danger in the house. But I shall not accompany you on the street any more. Reder, the jealous little wretch, made a remark to me, lately, across the table — contemptible. And I dared not understand him, dared not give him a good slap in the face.

Miriam.— Oh, him! After all, there's only one person who matters.

Albrecht.— Sieg.

Miriam.— Yes — he. (*Pause. It grows darker.*)

Miriam (*has gone to the harmonium, has put back the cover and struck one or two chords*).

Albrecht (*shrugs his shoulders*).— Don't do that — don't!

Miriam.— Why? Now and then I hear you, yourself — in the twilight, when you are quite alone.

Albrecht.— A stupid old habit.

Miriam (*pointing to the Bible*).— Do you know there's a letter sticking in there?

Albrecht.— Where? What sort of a letter?

Miriam (*opens the book*).— There — in the Bible — a gray letter ——

Albrecht.— The deuce! I had forgotten it. It was in the letter box to-day at noon, and I did not feel like reading it, so I stuck it away. (*Takes the letter.*)

Miriam (*reads at the place where the Bible opened*).— Right in 'The Song of Songs.'

Albrecht (*on the other side, while he cuts open the envelope*).— Oh, that is beautiful!

Miriam.— I don't know it.

Albrecht.— I will read it with you.

Miriam.— From whom is your letter?

Albrecht.— From my father.

Miriam.— From your father — and long, it seems to me. I will go.

Albrecht (*reading*).— What for? I'll be through in a moment.

you clenching your teeth — the mad passion to press on — I know you would let yourself be struck dead rather than give a false bend to a finger joint — and yet, you will put some one else's head on my body.

Albrecht (*rising crossly*).— Do stop bothering me with this useless talk. What do you know about art — about plastic art, I mean? You are much too musical to understand it. No musician understands anything about plastic art. They are in direct opposition to each other — turn their backs on each other. Keep your nose in your violin case and don't imagine that your jealousy, the jealousy of the field for the meadow ——

Miriam.— Not this time. Yes, I hate her, this Luigia, with her goggle eyes, with all her stupid, cowlike beauty, but I would swallow all that — even that. (*Throwing the covers off and springing up.*) But just look at me, Albrecht, look at me! Can the expression of her face and the expression of my body ever — and yet they must go together — oh, I don't know how to say it!

Albrecht (*stands in front of her and observes her narrowly*).— There is something in your glance — in your laugh — in your exultation even, a suggestion of great sorrow, as it were. And I cannot make use of that, there.

Miriam (*lowers her head*).— A suggestion of great sorrow?

Albrecht (*takes her in his arms comfortingly*).— That is not a reproach. Perhaps you wouldn't be so beautiful if this veil were not over you. And, my child, isn't this a dispute about the emperor's beard? Your figure with your face — that would be an advertisement in bold type, Sieg would say.

Miriam.— Oh yes, Sieg!

Albrecht.— That's where the hitch comes in.

Miriam.— And I tell you he wouldn't notice it.

Albrecht.— What? Even as it is, I don't feel one bit comfortable when I think that sometime I'll have to show it to him. Who else has arms like these? A neck like this? Such incomparable perfection of proportion of the whole body?

Miriam (*shakes her head*).— And he doesn't see it. He is the wisest of men in wise matters. But not in stupid ones. Not in absolutely commonplace ones. He has placed a picture of me in his good heart and now I must always look like that picture. That has been my whole misfortune, I never dared to have a fault. Do you think I could have confessed to him that I was so foolishly in love with your beautiful boy model?

Albrecht.— And you have had to be satisfied with me, you poor thing.

Miriam.— You resemble each other to a certain extent. Only he is much more beautiful. And how he can talk dialect! And sing Alpine

songs! Oh, if only I could talk a dialect. Any dialect at all. It is so homelike. And I have never been at home anywhere. Always on the go, from one city to another, out of one strange place into another strange place. There is nothing for a child in that kind of a life. One never grows to be like other people in that way.

Albrecht.— And that's the best thing one can do.

Miriam (*starting*).— Sh — was that the house door?

Albrecht (*frees her, listens at the entrance*).— Nothing. Nobody. Did you lock the door upstairs — the door to your room?

Miriam (*nods*).

Albrecht.— Then what can happen to us? No one can come in here and no one upstairs. There is no danger in the house. But I shall not accompany you on the street any more. Reder, the jealous little wretch, made a remark to me, lately, across the table — contemptible. And I dared not understand him, dared not give him a good slap in the face.

Miriam.— Oh, him! After all, there's only one person who matters.

Albrecht.— Sieg.

Miriam.— Yes — he. (*Pause. It grows darker.*)

Miriam (*has gone to the harmonium, has put back the cover and struck one or two chords*).

Albrecht (*shrugs his shoulders*).— Don't do that — don't!

Miriam.— Why? Now and then I hear you, yourself — in the twilight, when you are quite alone.

Albrecht.— A stupid old habit.

Miriam (*pointing to the Bible*).— Do you know there's a letter sticking in there?

Albrecht.— Where? What sort of a letter?

Miriam (*opens the book*).— There — in the Bible — a gray letter ——

Albrecht.— The deuce! I had forgotten it. It was in the letter box to-day at noon, and I did not feel like reading it, so I stuck it away. (*Takes the letter.*)

Miriam (*reads at the place where the Bible opened*).— Right in 'The Song of Songs.'

Albrecht (*on the other side, while he cuts open the envelope*).— Oh, that is beautiful!

Miriam.— I don't know it.

Albrecht.— I will read it with you.

Miriam.— From whom is your letter?

Albrecht.— From my father.

Miriam.— From your father — and long, it seems to me. I will go.

Albrecht (*reading*).— What for? I'll be through in a moment.

Miriam (*takes up the Bible, reads in an undertone to herself*).— 'I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my friend that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night. I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet: how shall I defile them? My friend put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him. I rose up to open to my friend, and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. I opened to my friend: but my friend had withdrawn himself, and was gone:' (*She stops and looks over at* ALBRECHT *for an instant. Then more softly and hesitatingly.*) 'My soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.' (*She is silent and stares at the ground before her. Then she breaks off a twig of the myrtle and puts it in her place in the Bible.*) Myrrh — myrtle. They are blooming now. (*Plucks a few blossoms, holds them above her head and lets them fall into her hair.*) It would be beautiful, if it were not so ugly. (*Looks at the Rodin group.*) She hasn't any, either. Oh, pshaw! Everything must come to an end sometime, and we shall all be dead. Some night will not be followed by any morning. But not to-day, not this night. (*She hastens passionately toward* ALBRECHT *and is about to embrace him, but starts back frightened.*)

Albrecht (*has let the letter drop, and is staring straight ahead, with a very gloomy expression*).

Miriam.— What is the matter with you? Albrecht, what has happened to you?

Albrecht (*jumps up, the letter falls to the ground.* MIRIAM *picks it up*).— What does the man want of me? What is it? I am no philosopher. I have no ideas. (*Walking passionately up and down.*) Spirit! Knowledge! Rats!! To observe phenomena — seize and hold them firmly — to find out Nature and bind her until her breath leaves her — that's what I want! For that I grapple with her. And all else shall concern me —(*He swallows something.*)

Miriam (*who has cast a hasty glance into the letter*).— I don't know why you should be so excited. Here is something about your mother and about your sister. (*Reads.*) 'Elizabeth has developed so in her personality and in independent thought that she has grown to be my hand and my eye. Mama is still the youngest of us three, she is beginning even so early as this to care for all the young blackbirds that will fall out of the nest in the spring and is planning to breed earth worms to feed them with.' (*She laughs.*)

Albrecht (*who cannot help smiling*).— Yes, mother was always like that.

Miriam.— 'Of myself, my dear Albrecht, I cannot tell you much, at least not much that could be of interest for your art and youth.' Youth? But you are over thirty. Is one still young at thirty?

Albrecht.— Still young, but no longer young. You are quite right.

Miriam.— 'You are in the midst of the multiformity and bustle of life, while it is my task to prepare myself for death with discretion and without any feeling of resignation to what is a necessity.' (*Stops in perplexity.*) How old is your father?

Albrecht.— Sixty-five or six. I don't know which.

Miriam (*is about to fold up the letter*).— I think we had better stop.

Albrecht. No. Now we will go on. (*Takes it and reads as if to himself in a loud, firm voice*). 'Our long separation has made me uncertain in my estimation of your spiritual features. I believe I feel that you have much behind you, but still have the most before you, and that the moment is no longer distant in which you too will be ripe for your spiritual rebirth, which may well be regarded as the antithesis to the earlier physical birth. First, the baptism with water and then the baptism with the Holy Ghost. What shall I wish for you at that moment? The sinking of free will in willing the necessary recognition of the truth of your own being and determination to avow this truth, deliverance from life's conflict in life's work. This is what I wish for you, and with this, my dear boy, I bid you good night. Your old father, John Herkner.' (*Pause.*)

Miriam.— That sounds as if he would like to see you again.

Albrecht.— Perhaps he would.

Miriam.— But you are not going to him? O Albrecht, I believe then you will never come back again.

Albrecht (*pulling himself together forcibly*).— I have no intention of going. At least not now. First, that thing there must be finished. I have too much to do — enough! (*Puts the letter in his pocket.*) Go now, my child, go. What makes your eyes so soft?

Miriam.— I don't know. Something has come — as if from far away.

Albrecht (*draws her close to him*).— I must ask you something — don't be angry. (*He whispers something in her ear.*)

Miriam (*blushing a deep scarlet, hides her face on his shoulder*).— No, no, certainly not — have no fear.

Albrecht.— Not even for myself? To-morrow, then, at three?

Miriam.— Not before to-morrow — all right. (*She stands in front of him for a moment, her hands extended downward and twisted in his, her wide-eyed gaze raised to his face, she lowers it again and struggles against some feeling in herself. Softly.*) You dearest of men! (*She suddenly frees herself and hurries out through the door leading into the dressing-room.*)

Albrecht (*goes to the door and listens to her departing footsteps*).— Upstairs! (*He breathes freely again as if relieved.*) What a life this is! What a prison this is! (*He turns on the electric light, unbolts the door into the hall, half opens it and calls out.*) Moedl!

Moedl's voice.— It's here I am.

Albrecht.— Where?

Moedl's voice.— Right here, sure!

Albrecht (*slams the door to, angrily*).— Ox! (*Hurried, heavy footsteps are heard in the hall. There is a knock.*) Come in, what in three devils ——

Moedl (*enters*).— Gawd bless ye, Master Herkner! (*He is out of breath from running, but not in the least embarrassed. In the middle of the twenties, the splendid build of a peasant, slender and yet strong, a half a head taller than* ALBRECHT. *Bold, merry face, with a very small black mustache. He wears an old soldier's cap, a short, gray coat with staghorn buttons, and on his right hand a ring for playing on the zither.*)

Albrecht (*bursting out at him testily and irritably*).— Right there, were you? Coming at once, were you? Where have you been the whole afternoon? Well, you wait, I'll give another three months' wages in advance, so that the fellow can play the gentleman, and sit and carouse in the saloon. And I have to clear up, myself, and wash the floor ——

Moedl (*unruffled*).— Come now,— is it doin' me wurruk f'r me ye've been, Mister Herkner?

Albrecht.— If you're going to be insolent, fellow, I'll throw you downstairs, do you understand?

Moedl.— Bein's we ar-re on the gr-round flur now, that wudn't be anny plisure at all, Mister Herkner.

Albrecht.— Be off, and look out!

Moedl.— At ye're sarvice, Mister Herkner! (*Goes into the studio. By the streak of light, seen between the curtains, it is evident that* MOEDL *has turned on the electric light. He is heard working around in the room. He sings as he works.*)

Up at Donisle
There's beer f'r to-day — hi ——
Th' Lor-rd Gawd himself
Might pass ye a mug — ha!

Albrecht (*stretches himself*).— Yes sir! a good mug of beer — that's what I need!

Moedl (*sings*). And whin wan has dhrunk,
His courage's that high,
The Virgin Mary's chamber window
He'd be r-ready to try.

Albrecht.— Moedl, you'll be locked up yet!

Moedl.— Not me! (*Some one outside whistles shrilly two descending, rhythmical fourths.*)

Albrecht.— Aha — Sieg. (*Answers with the same whistle.*)

Siegmund (*enters, in a winter overcoat, under which is a dress coat and white vest, on his head a high hat. End of the thirties, rather small than large, not very strong. The narrow, intelligent face shows an unmistakable resemblance to Miriam's. Reddish mustache, dark, soft hair lying close to the head and already slightly gray around the temples. Gold eyeglasses. Half merrily, half whimsically, after a suppressed yawn*).— Good by, Albrecht.

Albrecht (*giving him his hand*).— Why good by? You have just come.

Siegmund (*takes off his high hat and puts it down*).— Indeed? Have I just come? Are you sure? Well, I'll be generous and not quarrel about it. It doesn't do any good, anyhow. That's plainly to be seen in our office and in the advertisement sheet. Every one is sure he is right and eats of the great world melon until he has stomachache. Oh, boy, boy, but I feel ill! Give me a chair. (*He sits down.*)

Albrecht (*his hands in the pockets of his trousers, standing in front of him*).— What a fine gentleman you are!

Siegmund.— I don't know exactly what you mean by that. But I object to it. I am a social democrat, my dear sir! I am for revolution — of course with the grand duke at the head! Otherwise they would put me off the editorial staff. Where would I be then? Why, must I certainly write another article. Look it up in Düntzer. Volume six, page seven, line eight; here Goethe made a mistake. He loved Frederika more than Lili. Oh, the blockhead! I do not refer to Goethe. Children, leave me to my Lina! And give me a drink. A drop of water!

Albrecht (*calls*).— Moedl! Let the water run! Has Brand announced himself yet? You come home from the banquet in fine condition. You opened the new museum beautifully. Whom did you sit next?

Siegmund.— Who sat next me, you must certainly mean. Oh, a fine man, a distinguished man, an estimable man! He has a mild, Jewish, old-womanish face, and his legs are like ornamental boot-trees from a *Jugend** sketch, by Pankok. I don't believe the good God would be capable of anything like them. Why next to this particular person, I asked myself, for I have been out of the world for so long? But I was soon to recognize that not the seating committee, but Providence had placed me in his company.

Moedl (*enters with a glass of water.* ALBRECHT *motions towards* SIEGMUND).— To the doctor.

**Jugend* (Youth), a periodical published in Munich.

Siegmund (*taking it*).— Blessings on you, my son!

Moedl.— Don't mention it. (*Goes back into the studio.*)

Siegmund (*empties the glass at one draught, and puts it down*).— Tell me, Albrecht, am I so hot or you?

Albrecht (*springing up and forcibly taking off his overcoat*).— Why didn't you take this off, you ass?

Siegmund (*resisting*).— But if later I should be too cold again, Albrecht, good little boy, I'll give you a pencil, a penholder — a notebook that's never been used — only leave me one sleeve — a half one. I always suffer so with cold feet.

Albrecht (*hangs up the overcoat, laughing*).

Siegmund.— You hyena! I could actually find it in my heart, now, to regret what I did for you to-day.

Albrecht.— Have you launched forth another article on me?

Siegmund.— N-n-Nope! I'll never do it again! To think that I should praise you beyond all measure and afterwards have you give me to understand that a Dachau peat peasant's tapeworm knew more about plastic art then I. To-day's deed was sacrificial, too, but not so dangerous. Well then, at my right sat the fine, estimable, and distinguished man whose first name was Louis. Native of Frankfort on the Main and calling himself after the Roi Soleil. Well, what of that? This miserable bag of bones was actually named Siegmund. Only Louis has arrived at a higher goal; at a mighty money bag, at the little word 'von,' and now, by a turn of his hand he might be generous also and charitable and good. But then, that would have to be in *The Day* and he would have to have his photograph in *The Week*. Only that might cost something, too. A hundred thousand or somewhere near that.

Albrecht.— And what has all this to do with me? Am I to model the man, or something of the sort?

Siegmund.— Be silent! You are dreadful! I certainly am capable of no such vulgarity. I am weak, but no knave. Model that man? Don't you know me any better than that? For three years we have been friends; to be sure, we have not saved each other's lives, but, on the other hand, we have often borrowed money of each other. By the way, here is your watch back again. It's wonderful, but never again will I borrow it from you. You have misjudged me too sadly.

Albrecht (*puts on his watch*).— Dear friend, talk as an ox bellows and then I shall understand you.

Siegmund.— I am no ox, so can't bellow. Listen to me. I poisoned Louis, my lady at dinner, between a glass of Bernkastler and one of Cli-

quot,— perhaps it may have been only Henckell,—by spoonfuls, with the idea that you were her man.

Albrecht.— Are you crazy?

Siegmund.— You were the most gifted of our young people, not Reder, who was stretching out his giraffe neck toward us. You were already rather famous ——

Albrecht.— Woe is me!

Siegmund.— Had won the silver medal four years ago in Paris, and that only the right commission was needed for you to win the gold one.

Albrecht.— I don't care a straw for it.

Siegmund.— First have it, dear friend, then don't care for it. In short, when we reached the dessert, Louis was completely permeated by the idea that, as once on a time the maid had been called to liberate France, he too had been called telegraphically from Horeb's heights to acquire your latest creation, to have it executed in marble, and to present it to the New Museum. Ugh! What a sentence that was! Like one of our opera reporter's.

Albrecht.— Hm! The man seems to me not qualified to judge. The work will not please him nor he the work.

Siegmund.— He can no longer see. I have so dazzled him, I have been so enthusiastic ——

Albrecht.— Man! You know nothing about it yourself, yet.

Siegmund.— For that very reason. Perhaps if I had I could not have been so enthusiastic about it. Be calm! He is infected through and through. To-morrow I am going to him, the day after to-morrow he will come to you, perhaps he will succeed in dragging the director here with him. I let drop a hint of a rich American and a 'still richer' Russian who were considering the work. Note well that I said considering, not thinking of buying.

Albrecht (*laughs*).— You certainly are an artful wretch.

Siegmund.— Be quiet, I haven't tasted the grounds yet. (*Rises.*) Now, at last, let me see it, the thing that for half a year you have been working at behind this curtain as secretly as Penelope. I have talked so much about it that now I am curious myself.

Albrecht (*in painful uncertainty*).— But Moedl must be putting the cloths over it.

Siegmund.— What's that you say? (*Calls to the back.*) Moedl! Don't pack up that earthenware yet. I'd like to look at it. I have a customer!

Moedl's voice.— I'm after doin' it now.

Siegmund (*hastily mounting the steps*).— Wait! I'm coming at once! (*Disappears between the curtains.*)

Albrecht (*has made an involuntary movement, as if he would hold him back and now stands gloomily in the foreground, his back to the spectators*).

Moedl (*comes slowly down the steps, looks at him a little while, and says half to himself*).— I cudden't think iv anny way out iv it — an' annyhow he had to see it sometime — didn't he? (*From above are heard the soft tones of a violin, in a yearning minor melody performed with a beautiful singing quality.*)

Albrecht (*bites his lips*).

Moedl (*aside*).— Och, she's at it again! (*Talks loudly, as if to drown the sound of the violin.*) Oh aye—that's th' way iv things! If a man is on'y healthy an' has a good gait. Th' last masked ball is to-night in th' flower room. Cud I go after a bit?

Albrecht.— For all I care.

Moedl.— Hasn't he had enough yet? (*Goes toward the curtain.*) Docthor! I want t' tur-rn th' light out. Our ilicthric light. It cost twinty dollars last month.

Siegmund (*comes down the steps, completely sobered, deeply in earnest, and much moved*).

Moedl (*steals slowly back into the studio, wiping his nose with the back of his hand, his eyes going from one to the other of the two men. The sound of the violin dies away*).

Siegmund (*seats himself again, bends forward, claps his hands slowly again and again between his knees, which are spread apart, after a pause*).— What can one say about it? Yes, what can one say about it? (*Looking up at* ALBRECHT.) What a fellow you are, what an enviable fellow!

Albrecht (*looks at him questioningly*).

Siegmund.— Yes, I mean you, you blond lubber — you peasant, without a classical education; you boor with the blasphemous Prometheus eyes, but what is to be done about it? There he sits and forms men after his own image! (*Springing up and seizing* ALBRECHT *by the shoulders.*) Fellow, I could thrash you from admiration!

Albrecht (*somewhat relieved*).— Indeed?

Siegmund.— Indeed, the clod says! Have you no other reply to make to this outpouring of my heart? No original thanks? No tiny shake of your spiritual locks? Can you only make such things, really?

Albrecht. —Only that, really!

Siegmund (*frees him, but continues to rail at him, to himself, as it were, between his teeth*).— Blockhead! Dunce! Don't interrupt me. I must abuse you. Have you no corns to be trodden on? Physical or spiritual? No? Why not? Look at me! I learned to read so young that I can no longer do it without glasses. My teachers lauded me to the skies in

my school certificates; my professors contended with each other in treating me with marked distinction; the work I did for my doctor's degree received attention from the pinnacles of philology,— and what has become of this splendid specimen, brought up by hand on the most delicate intellectual food? A journalist who is so much the cleverer as the others are stupider than he, an individual who in his perfect knowledge of himself no longer has any self at all. He stands here in a dress suit and white vest before this broad-shouldered gorilla, and seems to himself — heigh-ho!

Albrecht.— Dear Sieg, the tailor can't be a shoemaker, nor the shoemaker a tailor. The main thing is what each man attains to in his own trade.

Siegmund (*slaps him on the shoulder*).— Don't worry yourself, my good boy! What I shall attain to in good time! Editor in chief, with a muzzle. And if I get up high enough, a journey to the seat of war, to the Boers.

Albrecht.— To the Boers? Then I shall go with you at once.

Siegmund.— I suppose so. But I'm for the English. They have actually offered it to me, my chiefs. Globe trotting for a year — and favorable terms.

Albrecht.— Do it! Take the trip. It'll be perfectly splendid.

Siegmund.— Indeed? And Miriam?

Albrecht (*startled, becomes very red and slowly lays down his cigarette*).

Siegmund (*notices this and smiles to himself*).— What am I to do with the child? I cannot take her with me, and I will not leave her here. (*Lights a cigarette at the one* ALBRECHT *has laid down.*)

Albrecht (*his face turned away*).— But such an unusual opportunity ——

Siegmund.— Dear son, you can't chase two hares at once. Duty and pleasure — it don't work! And duty is almost as imperious as art. I must carry this one — until some one takes it from me.

Albrecht (*is dumb*).

Siegmund (*who has ceased talking for a second, as if waiting for a response, continues*).— But I don't know what I am thinking of. I am talking as of a burden and should talk as of a blessing. Joy in my life I have long since lost. If I had not joy in her! To you I may certainly express myself freely without being taken for a vain fool. She is a rare creature. Such a precious little mortal! Especially in everyday affairs — and of course in the most unusual affairs, too.

Albrecht.— That's true. She is like no one else. She is quite different from you.

Siegmund (*laughs heartily*).— Thank God, you boor! But some small credit belongs to me for that. She has come to be what she is in spite of the fact that she has grown up without parents, or perhaps because.

Albrecht.— Let us say because.

Siegmund.— Indeed? Have you too had your experiences on this point?

Albrecht.— I? They wanted to make a musician of me. Because that was the unfulfilled wish of my father's youth. I soon settled that for them, however. (*It has become dark behind the curtain.*)

Moedl (*comes down the steps*).

Siegmund.— Well, Moedl, I congratulate you on your latest work.

Moedl (*laughing*).— Faith, doctor, an' haven't we made a fine thing? Ye wudden't aisy find a prittier la-ad, now wud ye?

Siegmund.— How the fellow pays court to himself! The girl pleases me even better. She will set the heavens on fire. Are you insured against fire, Albrecht?

Moedl (*cutting him short*).— I'd somethin' t'ask ye, Misther Herkner.

Albrecht.— I know what it is beforehand, I think, the masked ball.

Moedl.— Cud I take a white cravat to wear?

Albrecht.— So soon again? The next thing he'll be hankering for my dress suit.

Moedl (*goes out laughing, so that he shows all his teeth*).— If 'twud on'y fit! Good night t' ye all. (*Goes out.*)

Siegmund.— This topsy-turvy world! He goes to the masked ball and you stay at home. Apropos of which, I must draw your attention to the fact that to-day is the last and that you have not been to a single one the whole winter long. What does this mean?

Albrecht.— I am no longer a green boy.

Siegmund.— I am almost a gray one, and still manage to cover my expenses. You sent Helen off long ago; tell me, precisely how do you live?

Albrecht (*murmurs something to himself*).

Siegmund.— How? I don't understand. Don't be so disgruntled, if I may be allowed the request.

Albrecht.— One sometimes does a model all up, you know.

Siegmund.— Still this is no condition to live in! It certainly can't last. You had better marry!

Albrecht (*breaks out into hearty laughter*).— What? I marry? Perhaps the way Reder does, who is presently to be divorced for the third time?

Siegmund.— Now, you'll soon smoke yourself better again. Besides, with Reder it is only his love of order.

Albrecht.— It's comedy. Why does he have to marry his mistresses? I'll never lend myself to that.

Siegmund.— Do you think so lightly of marriage?

Albrecht.— On the contrary, so highly. But a vocation and an art do not go together. A vocation may persist, an art must grow. Do I know who I shall be some day? Therefore I can be answerable for the strength of my sentiments, but not for their durability.

Siegmund.— That, however, depends entirely on your wife.

Albrecht.— Wife! A kind of blond hen who cackles at the kitchen door.

Siegmund.— Oh, no — Miriam.

Albrecht (*paralyzed*).— Miri — Miriam?

(*Long Pause*)

Siegmund.— Woe is me! It seems I have made a stupid blunder.

Albrecht (*tries to get himself together*).— Pardon me, Siegmund — forgive me ——

Siegmund (*parrying*).— What for? What for?

Albrecht.— You offer me an honor ——

Siegmund.— And you decline with thanks. Period. (*He walks back and forth several times, then stands still in front of* ALBRECHT *and smiles.*) All over. But let me explain how I happened to do this. For a month or two I have thought that I noticed — probably because I wanted to notice it — that you liked her. Liked her very much. Then, too, you were shutting yourself off so completely from the eternal feminine — the remarks of others — so it went, one thing led to another, and finally I was almost convinced that all I had to do was to help you into the saddle. I have done it stupidly and I am the one to be embarrassed. But I do not regret it, for in one way or another I had to broach the subject. (*He takes* ALBRECHT'S *hand.*) Can I rely on you, Albrecht?

Albrecht (*oppressed*).— I think so.

Siegmund.— I have been mistaken in you. But not in Miriam. It is no shame and will not lower her in your eyes if I confess to you, you please her. At times she is merry, generally she is sad, then again she cries her heart out — well, and so on. And did you hear her playing a while ago? The whole yearning of a young girl's heart! Perhaps more than that. Why are you so pale? Shall I stop?

Albrecht.— No, no.

Siegmund.— I cannot believe that this is at all bad. Why shouldn't she have her youthful enthusiasms? It is natural, and the natural is always right. But you realize that we can't let this go any further. You are too dangerous for that. And therefore, do me this kindness, do not send her any more flowers and keep out of her way, where you can do so with politeness.

Albrecht (*sits down*).

Siegmund.— Dear friend, what is the matter with you? I do not reproach you in the least. I am the wrongdoer. Well, I can talk no more. And I would so have liked to have your advice.

Albrecht.— My advice?

Siegmund (*sits down near him*).— You see, Albrecht, you are not so clever as I, you stand several inches nearer Nature, you have more instinct. I am worried about Miriam. She is at an age where my brotherly fatherhood is no longer sufficient. Now, she needs a mother — or a husband.

Albrecht.— Are you determined to marry her?

Siegmund.— Not to-day and not to-morrow. But I don't want to let her get into that uncomfortable condition which can be very beautifully explained if you are a medical student, but cannot be averted. After all, what is it that this world is chiefly concerned about? About the whole banal business of being happy. My life's great renunciation is signed. I have written tragedies so long, that at last I have seen that one must be contented if one doesn't live through any. But for the child, I will create it, or, for all I care, steal it, rob some one or strike him dead for it, but have it she shall,— happiness, pure, sparkling happiness.

Albrecht (*rises*).— Does it exist?

Siegmund.— It must, somewhere, if not, I'll have nothing more to do with the world. Well, we'll solve the world riddle to-morrow, and to-day we'll eat our roast veal. Are you going out to a restaurant?

Albrecht.— What restaurant?

Siegmund.— Any one, only, I'll go somewhere else. (*Shakes his hand vigorously.*) Good night, my dear friend! Sleep the sleep of a clear conscience and a good heart. (*Goes out into the corridor, carrying his hat and overcoat.*)

Albrecht (*stares at the ground*).— The deuce — the deuce! (*The door is heard to unlatch a little again.*)

Siegmund's voice.— Albrecht Herkner lives here and is at home, too. (*He sticks his head in at the door.*) A visitor, Albrecht — is it all right?

Albrecht (*aside*).— It must be.

Siegmund (*opens the door, lets* SCHEITHAMMER *in and closes the door behind him*).

Scheithammer (*wears a thick, black overcoat; under it a long, black clergyman's coat, gray woolen muffler around his neck, low, round hat in his hand. He is tall and thin. Behind gold spectacles, colorless eyes in a bony face. Equally colorless, smooth hair. Speaks slowly, in a voice with little resonance. Looks considerably older than* ALBRECHT, *and at first gives an impression of awkwardness, which is only gradually dispelled by the steadfast*

quiet of his outer and the spiritual vigor of his inner being).— Good evening, Albrecht!

Albrecht (*goes toward him in great surprise*).— Well, what is this? Lewis Scheithammer! Where do you come from? From the moon?

Scheithammer.— No. From Steinkirchen.

Albrecht.— That's so, that's so. Really, I had forgotten that you are there now. Must I say 'your reverence' to you? But do sit down! Take off your things! (*He tries to help him.*)

Scheithammer (*prevents his doing so in a friendly but determined manner*). — Thank you, thank you. I'll do it all myself. (*Hangs the muffler over the arm of the chair, on which he afterwards sits.*)

Albrecht.— Well, how are you? And what brought you here? And how does everything look in the old town?

Scheithammer (*after he has blown his nose in his cotton handkerchief*).— I arrived here this Saturday morning on the 8.30 mail train, and have put up at the Bunch of Grapes.

Albrecht.— The Bunch of Grapes? The Bunch of Grapes hotel? I don't know it.

Scheithammer.— It is an inn, not a hotel. This forenoon I had to go to his Grace the Archbishop, Doctor von Miller, on personal business. At noon I was here and put the letter into ——

Albrecht.— What? It was you who put that letter ——

Scheithammer.— Didn't you notice that it was unstamped?

Albrecht.— No. I did notice something about the envelope, but didn't examine it closely.

Scheithammer.— Well, I put the letter in the box. And in the afternoon I had to go to the public library to look up some books for your father, and to pay his compliments to his successor, Doctor Flohrke.

Albrecht.— It is very friendly of you to take the trouble to come here twice, especially when the distance is so great and the connections are so miserable. If you had left your card and address here ——

Scheithammer.— At first, my intention was to return home again this evening at 8.50. But the two hours' wait in Wehrbach at night and the arriving at 4 o'clock in the morning are rather wearing. And I have not been very well lately. Considering these things, I decided not to leave until to-morrow. In the second place, I was not sure whether you would come to me and I had received a verbal commission for you, also.

Albrecht.— Indeed — from whom?

Scheithammer.— From your sister, from Miss Elizabeth.

Albrecht.— From Bess! Is that so! What is it?

Scheithammer.— Yesterday afternoon I went to see your father, to

inform him of my journey. He had just put the postage stamp on a letter to you. Miss Elizabeth took it out of his hand, gave it to me, and added, 'Go and see Albrecht's studio yourself this time and give him this letter.' And after your father had gone out, she said to me, 'Please, dear pastor, give my greetings to Albrecht and tell him I asked you to say that in the last three years papa had grown quite old, quite old.'

Albrecht (*after a short pause*).— Is that all?

Scheithammer.— That is all.

Albrecht.— Do you go often to see father?

Scheithammer.— During the winter, two or three evenings a week. Together we have gone through almost the entire range of philosophy, that is, I read aloud to him and listen as an humble scholar to the comments your father makes.

Albrecht.— You get on better with him than you used to with me years ago.

Scheithammer.— It is easy to understand why. You were domineering and I was obstinate.

Albrecht.— But we had jolly times in spite of that. Jolly holidays. Good Lord, how we thrashed each other!

Scheithammer (*not without humor*).— You did me. I was rather a timid boy. (*He looks around.*) You are quite nicely fixed here.

Albrecht.— I wouldn't say that exactly. From the door all the way up the hall, everything's shaky and rusting away, an old barrack, which sooner or later must be torn down. But I have to be contented, for I don't pay much and sculpture is about the most expensive trade there is. Then, too, I am very little disturbed here. A friend on the floor above me. No one else.

Scheithammer.— May I see your studio?

Albrecht.— Frankly, Scheithammer — do you really care to?

Scheithammer.— No. But Miss Elizabeth wanted me to.

Albrecht.— Miss Elizabeth doesn't want it at all. And anyhow, I haven't anything there now. The new group has been covered up. My first work, the Lucifer, she knows. And she fainted before the naked danseuse from the Moulin Rouge, three years ago.

Scheithammer.— You brought that with you from Paris?

Albrecht.— Of course. I come home, joy in my soul, a medal and money in my pocket, and the shower bath I get! One doesn't expect interest from people who understand nothing about your work, but they might at least hold their tongues.

Scheithammer.— Your father's bent being, as it is, psychological, you cannot find fault with him for wishing that you might test your talent on worthier objects than drunken hussies.

Albrecht.— But that isn't what matters! I know to-day, perfectly well, what was wrong with the thing! Not the subject! It is too garrulous in its details and not logical enough in its movement. But if at that time I had provided you with a beautifully curled Thorwaldsen Christ, I would have made the same blunders and to-day would have even less pleasure in it. A young fellow should have wine in his veins and not holy water.

Scheithammer.— There are others who have blood.

Albrecht.— You talk of blood! Yet, you haven't any! You, Scheithammer! From school into the seminary, from the seminary into the sacristy. A permanent position and a ready-made belief! It's easy to live that way.

Scheithammer.— That's the way an intelligence incapable of understanding judges. Let us come somewhat closer to the matter. We live in a time of spiritual homelessness. Who can say to-day that he has a permanent position and a ready-made belief? The old is torn down, the new not yet built up. Now, the dome of my faith cannot be shaken. But many an addition which has become archaic and rotten no longer pleases me, many a form of the faith, as, for example, the worship of the Virgin Mary or the heart of Jesus. And let us look, in addition to this, at the profession of the priest. As teacher, judge, and example of the people, a lofty virtue is demanded, and for the daily celebration of the Holy Mass great purity and the surrender of the soul to God. Who is always capable of all these ? Who always escapes the temptation to bargain with his sense of duty? And if self-deception ceases and conscience demands a reckoning, then there is strife. And then, living as a true man is no longer easy.

Albrecht (*who has listened to him wide eyed*).— Still, all this seems to me to have reference more to external things ——

Scheithammer.— I cannot speak for others. But since we have already gone so far, and as I know that you are no prattler — I went to my spiritual superior to-day to seek advice concerning my grievous doubts.

Albrecht.— And did you receive it?

Scheithammer (*after a pause*).— I shall see what the church, prayer, and sacrament can do.

Albrecht.— And if they can do nothing?

Scheithammer (*rises*).— Then I shall break my vows.

Albrecht.— Scheithammer, you overestimate your strength. Rome is strong.

Scheithammer.— God is still stronger. Where did I put my muffler?

Albrecht.— Here. Lewis — I must tell you — I have a great respect for you.

Scheithammer.— And what message am I to give to your dear people?

Albrecht.— Tell Elizabeth that I am coming as soon as I have finished my new work. And I will write to father to-morrow. What are you going to do this evening?

Scheithammer.— I shall read my Thomas Aquinas and then try to sleep. Till we meet again, Albrecht — very soon — at your father's!

Albrecht (*accompanies him to the door, then comes back and walks slowly up and down, sunk in deep thought*).— Self-deception — strife. God is still stronger. He is in earnest about it. (*He sits down, draws out his letter and reads for awhile.*) 'Your old father, John Herkner.' Perhaps my archbishop? (*Three knocks on the door of the dressing-room.*)

Albrecht (*jumps up, goes quickly to the hall door and bolts it, then to the dressing-room door and opens it*).— Miriam — you?

Miriam (*slipping in quickly*).— Yes, it is I. (*She is fully dressed, the long, loose, white garment leaving neck and arms uncovered. She throws herself on his breast.*)— O Albrecht!

Albrecht.— What is the matter with you, my child? And why did you come here again? Nobody has ——

Miriam.— Sieg has gone. To his mistress, I imagine. And Anna believes I have gone to bed with headache. O Albrecht! How sober you look! How pale you are! What has happened? I noticed Sieg was, too, when he came upstairs. What happened between you?

Albrecht (*with reassuring caresses*).— Nothing happened, nothing bad, only be calm, and don't talk too loud. We are in a glass case.

Miriam.— Has any one noticed anything?

Albrecht.— Something has been half noticed. There is always smoke where there is fire. Sieg asked me — (*He stops short.*)

Miriam.— He asked you ——

Albrecht.— Whether it was my intention — to marry you?

Miriam.— My poor Sieg — And you? What answer did you give him?

Albrecht.— None. I was so astonished — speechless — he took it for a no.

Miriam.— Then all is well.

Albrecht.— Miriam! Are you in earnest?

Miriam.— But Albrecht! Surely you could say only no. You certainly haven't the smallest five cent yes in your pocket.

Albrecht.— And you can take it so calmly?

Miriam.— Everything that one has thought out quite thoroughly one takes calmly. And I have thought this out quite thoroughly; that I can pray no star down from heaven, although as a child I did try to every

night. And I know you so well and my heart feels you so and understands you so and agrees with you in everything.

Albrecht.— Good, if it were a question of me alone, but you ——

Miriam.— Me? Are we all in the world for the same purpose? Must I be exactly like the Irenes and Alices? Each day like every other, sometimes in a cab and sometimes in a street car, but never in the golden coach with six white horses with waving ostrich plumes on their heads?

Albrecht (*moved*).— O you child, you child!

Miriam.— No longer a child! Not this long time! I know exactly what I want. To keep you as long as I can — and let you go as soon as I must. I shall scent that before you know it yourself, and then, I shall go so softly out at the door that even you will not hear me. And with this, you, my only beloved, with this, you have your mitten.

Albrecht.— But dare I take it — can I ——

Miriam.— Don't ask! Whom have I asked? You, you only. I would go into the fire to you with outstretched arms. To have you, to hold you with my hands, with my lips, with all the anxiety and secrecy of the rotten, spiral staircase, and the letting you wait in your dark room ——

Albrecht (*overpowered by passion, snatching her to him*).— And if you keep me waiting so long, I'll come for you — as I did that first time ——

Miriam.— It must always be like that first time — and when it is no longer like that, then I no longer want it — then I won't have it any longer — then the last time will have been.

Albrecht.— Not to-day, Miriam, not to-day. I cannot let you go! (*He covers her with frantic kisses.*)

ACT II

(JOHN HERKNER'S *study. Old-fashioned wainscoting. Folding doors in the center, closed so that they only just touch each other, a shimmer of light through the crack. Right center, a small door into the hall. Left center, wide double window. Before the window a large writing-table, full of books and manuscripts. In one corner an ideal bust of Plato badly executed; in another a large photograph of* ALBRECHT *when a boy. An armchair and waste paper basket. Left foreground, hanging on the wall, a clock which has stopped. Left background, against the wall, a large harmonium; on it three green, potted plants and an old Bible. Right foreground, a sofa and an oval table, on it a lamp that is going out. Two or three cane-bottomed chairs, unpretentious hangings and rugs. Against the walls, open bookcases, a few steel engravings: scenes from Preller's Odyssee and the Interment by Fra Bartolomeo. Outside*

the roar of a storm is heard, branches strike against the window and hail rattles against it. Mrs. Herkner sits in the left corner of the sofa, collapsed. Over her gray house dress, an old, black shawl in which she has wrapped herself.)

Elizabeth (in the other corner, a cover over her knees, her head leaning against the back of the sofa, utterly exhausted and weary. Raising her head a little, speaking cautiously to MRS. HERKNER).— Mother — are you asleep?

Mrs. Herkner.— No, my child, I cannot sleep.

Elizabeth.— And yet you haven't moved.

Mrs. Herkner.— I thought that you were asleep.

Elizabeth.— I cannot, either.

Mrs. Herkner.— Are you cold? Shall I put on more wood? The fire is going out.

Elizabeth.— And the lamp, too. I'll light the candles, so that we won't be in the dark.

Mrs. Herkner.— Oh dear, now — I'd just as soon be in the dark. If only the storm would stop,— this frightful storm!

Elizabeth (has risen and gone over to the writing-table, where she lights two candles. She is dressed in a dark blue, woolen gown. She is very tall, very slender, ashy fair, with fine features already a trifle sharp).— It comes from the mountains, mother. To-morrow morning there will be fresh snow on the ground and the storm will be over.

Mrs. Herkner.— To-morrow — Sunday — isn't it to-morrow now ——

Elizabeth (holding up her candle so as to light the face of the clock).— I'll see. *(Lowers her candle.)* Oh, dear, it has stopped.

Mrs. Herkner.— This is the first time in thirty-five years that it has stopped. Papa didn't wind it up yesterday. And never will again. Never again! *(Bursts into low sobs.)*

Elizabeth (puts down the candle, goes over to her and puts her arms around her).— Be brave, little mother, be brave. We have to bear it. And we must bear it as he would have wished. My foolish little mother!

Mrs. Herkner (drying her tears).— You are right, Elizabeth. As he would have wished. You must be severe with me. For of myself I am nothing. I have been something only through him. All I could do was to take care of him. And how I have worried! How many times have I been impatient when he wiped his pen with new handkerchiefs! If I had only let him do it! If he had only emptied the whole inkwell over them!

Elizabeth.— That's nothing, mother. That's not what really matters. What matters is the whole, the big things. And in these you were never impatient.

Mrs. Herkner (in a low voice).— Do you think so? Put the lamp out,

or it will smell, and he couldn't endure that. The storm! This storm! It will carry off the roof from over our heads yet!

Elizabeth (*while she puts out the lamp*).— I want to look in at him again. Perhaps there's a draft from the window. I'll take this cover in for him.

Mrs. Herkner.— We did put on his woolen stockings, and all his thick underclothing. Oh, how glad I am that we did everything for him ourselves and didn't allow him to be touched by that ugly woman with the hard hands!

Elizabeth.— But his black suit is so thin. I'll go in and see about it. Are you coming with me?

Mrs. Herkner.— In a minute, my child. I must have just one minute. I don't know, my feet seem to be quite numb. Go ahead.

Elizabeth (*goes out center*).

Mrs. Herkner (*turns her head round to look after her*).— How she loves him! How she cares for him! And she still cares. The poor, poor child! (*She rises with difficulty, goes to the stove, kneels down and puts on two or three pieces of wood.*)

Elizabeth (*returning*).— Now, he will certainly be warm. But mother! I can't allow that! Get up this minute!

Mrs. Herkner (*lifting herself up with her help*).— It is burning again now. How did he look? Still so beautiful and sad?

Elizabeth.— Beautiful — and stern.

Mrs. Herkner.— Do you know why?

Elizabeth (*maintains the silence of reserve*).

Mrs. Herkner.— Don't you know?

Elizabeth.— Perhaps!

Mrs. Herkner.— The boy — he wanted to see the boy again. And it is too late.

Elizabeth.— Much too late!

Mrs. Herkner.— When do you think he can arrive?

Elizabeth.— Not before noon. He probably didn't catch the night train.

Mrs. Herkner.— Did you telegraph distinctly?

Elizabeth.— Pitilessly distinctly and trebly urgently.

Mrs. Herkner.— My God! My God! How is this to be broken to him? Who will break it to him?

Elizabeth.— I will, mother. If need be, at the door.

Mrs. Herkner.— But surely not, if he comes at night? Think of the journey he has had! Think of this night! What if he should come now?

Elizabeth.— He will not come, mother, he will not come. He has not the urgent desire which would make him come now. And his journey —

He will have realized the worst and will bear it with the composure of a man.

Mrs. Herkner.— Of a man, you say. But, after all, he is father's boy — that feeling must remain unchanged.

Elizabeth (*presses her gently down on a chair*).— With many people, perhaps even that does not. And it is better to be prepared for such changes. You see, mother, we have not seen him for a long time. During precisely those years in which he has become somebody. And that does change the features of a soul more than anything else. Do you know what he looks like? I don't. I only believe that he is living a life with which we no longer have any connection, from which we are shut out. Think of his letters. Nothing but bolted doors. For us father's death is a calamity. For Albrecht it is probably a physical necessity.

Mrs. Herkner.— Elizabeth, then we have lost everything.

Elizabeth.— We had nothing to lose, I think. I can tell you how he will come up the steps. With the thought, if only the women's lamentations were over with! And now, I beg one thing of you. Do not let him see our sorrow. Simply father's wife and father's daughter. As such we must consider ourselves as far as he is concerned.

Mrs. Herkner (*timidly*).— And yet you are his sister and I his mother.

Elizabeth (*shrugs her shoulders sadly*).— He does not need us. He needs neither of us. (*A gentle ring is heard.*)

Mrs. Herkner.— That was downstairs — it's he, Elizabeth! It is he!

Elizabeth.— Be calm, mother, be calm! It is not he! Probably his return telegram.

Mrs. Herkner.— Well, some one must open the door, anyhow. I will waken Mary, or I will go myself.

Elizabeth (*has taken up one of the candles*).— The girl is dead tired from weeping. And you shall not take one step on those icy stairs, mother, you must promise me that you will stay in this room.

Mrs. Herkner.— Only into the hall — only where I can see down into the court.

Elizabeth.— Here in this room — you will promise me?

Mrs. Herkner.— Yes, yes! Whatever you wish; but take a shawl. (*She wraps her up.*)

Elizabeth (*as she goes out*).— The key is hanging in the kitchen?

Mrs. Herkner.— To your right, near the plate rack. And don't fall, the lower steps are always so slippery.

Elizabeth (*is gone*).

(*The bell rings again just as softly as before, but twice in succession.*)

Mrs. Herkner.— That is the boy. He rings so softly because he is

afraid. And I must stay here — and can do nothing. (*She runs into the bedroom.*) O John, John, the boy has come home!

(*The room remains empty for a moment.*)

Elizabeth (*opens the hall door, behind her,* ALBRECHT. *She puts down the light.*)

Albrecht (*hat in hand, his cloak around him, covered with mud and snow, his hair wet, sticking to his forehead. He falls into a chair near the door, utterly exhausted and struggling for breath; it is only after several seconds that he is again in condition to talk.*) The ringing didn't waken him, I hope?

Elizabeth (*her face turned away*).— You don't hear the bell in there.

Albrecht.— I have been standing down there for some time — and didn't venture ——

Elizabeth.— In the storm!

Albrecht.— Storm? Is it storming? Where is mother? With him?

Elizabeth.— I will bring her at once.

Albrecht.— Never mind! Never mind! There's time enough now for everything. God be thanked! (*He props his face in his hands.*)

Elizabeth (*has gone toward the door of the bedroom; at the moment when she is about to open it* MRS. HERKNER *comes out. She seizes her hand quickly, and says in a low voice*).— I could not do it yet. (*Aloud.*) Father is asleep I hope?

Mrs. Herkner (*looks only at* ALBRECHT, *goes slowly up to him*).— Are you here, Albrecht — are you here?

Albrecht (*stretches out his hands toward her without rising*).— Pardon me, mother, but I came up the hill a little too fast, and now ——

Mrs. Herkner (*drawing her hand over his forehead*).— Ice cold perspiration. Of course there was no hack there. (*She takes off his hat.*) Do give me your things — and take off your wet cloak. Do help him, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth (*who has been staring fixedly at* ALBRECHT, *studying him, comes toward them.*)— He must change all his clothes, mother. He is wet through to the skin. We still have an old suit of his. I will lay all his things out for him in my room. (*Goes out.*)

Mrs. Herkner.— This chair is so uncomfortable, my boy. You better come sit on the sofa.

Albrecht.— Let me stay here, mother. Don't laugh at me, but I am done up. Just three minutes and I shall be all right again. (*Hides his face again in his hands.*)

Mrs. Herkner.— Listen to me, Albrecht, you must go to bed. That'll be the best thing you can do.

Albrecht.— No, mother, no! I am not going to leave this spot. Even

that is too far for me. If I might only go in there. Doesn't either of you have to stay with him?

Mrs. Herkner.— Oh, it's just as well to leave him alone, now. Partly on account of the air — the room is small.

Albrecht.— Couldn't I look in — just through the crack between the doors?

Mrs. Herkner.— Later, Albrecht, later. Listen to your old mother. She means it for your good.

Albrecht (*reaches dumbly for her hand*).

Elizabeth (*coming in again*).— Your things are all ready.

Albrecht (*giving himself a shake*).— Well, then! Up with you, fellow!

Mrs. Herkner.— Shan't I go with you?

Albrecht.— No, mother. You mustn't. I thank you, but I'll not need you. I'll be back in a moment. (*Goes out.*)

Mrs. Herkner (*holds the door open to look after him. After she has closed it*).— You were mistaken, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth.— Perhaps, perhaps not. It has prostrated him only for the moment. Weakness has made him more tender. Will it continue when he is strong? We must wait until he is himself again.

Mrs. Herkner.—And until daylight. He must learn nothing before then.

Elizabeth.— Who knows whether I can manage that! If his eyes hadn't upset me so before — oh, one is forever letting oneself be carried away. I should have told him at once. Now, he, who was always truth incarnate, lies in there, and here, close by, I ——

Mrs. Herkner.— Elizabeth, you know what respect I have for you. But this time — what was it you said awhile ago? Only big things really matter. Sometimes the small things matter, Elizabeth. Even the very smallest. And it is for these that I am here. Let the boy get warm first. Let him eat a little something. I will make some porridge for him. Do you remember whether he prefers grits or sago? I think grits. That can be gotten ready quicker, too. And keep the news to yourself awhile longer. First comes my child and then the good God, and he certainly will have no objections. (*Goes out.*)

Elizabeth (*alone. She goes to the writing-table and takes up* ALBRECHT'S *photograph*).— Beautiful — and defiant. He didn't deserve it — didn't deserve it on father's account.

Albrecht (*enters, he has changed his clothes and combed the hair off his forehead*).— Have you been with him again? How is he?

Elizabeth.— Quiet — perfectly quiet.

Albrecht (*draws a deep breath*).— Give me your hand, Bess. I didn't see you before. You seem to have grown taller.

Elizabeth.— Oh no. Only older.

Albrecht.— And I, even older. (*Goes to the writing-table and points to the papers.*) All your hand-writing? All dictated by him?

Elizabeth.— Yes. (*Pointing to one sheet.*) Only yesterday morning.

Albrecht (*reads*).— 'On bringing forth Knowledge from Error.' (*Slowly seating himself.*) What doesn't the man think about?

Elizabeth.— When did you receive my telegram?

Albrecht.— Last evening — after eight. And in an instant — in an instant ——

Elizabeth.— So late! How was it possible for you, at that hour ——

Albrecht.— How? I don't know how. I don't the least know what happened until I was sitting in the train. And there I read your telegram — again, over and over again. Very ill! Father very ill! And nobody told me any more than that. And it was the dead of night. And nowhere was there any light, not even in me. Come here to me, Bess. And if it is not too hard for you, tell me how it happened. It came so suddenly.

Elizabeth (*takes a somewhat lower chair near to him, so that she talks into the air, as it were, without looking at him*).— So suddenly? As slowly as a rock crumbles. One doesn't notice it when one passes it every day. Father complained so little and the doctor said a man with heart disease might live to be a hundred years old.

Albrecht.— So it was heart disease. And I thought it was only something the matter with his eyes. Blind! To grow blind! That seemed to me the worst thing possible. That was what I was afraid of.

Elizabeth.— Father was not at all afraid of it. If we were sad he managed to laugh at us. The less a man sees outside himself the more he sees within, he used to say at such times.

Albrecht.— Yes, for the man who can! And yesterday?

Elizabeth.— Yesterday was a beautiful day. The snow was not melting, but the sun was warm. There was a scent of spring in the air. We were out walking together, father and I. Father was bent on going up the hill to St. John's. Papa, you sheep, I said, if you do, I'll certainly have to carry you home. He looked at me mockingly from under his eyebrows and pulled his old fur cap down lower over his forehead: You carry me? I'll carry you yet, all of you together.

Albrecht.— And after that?

Elizabeth.— After that — it was very dark in the church, the stained windows were so high up and the cold blue daylight was so far behind them. I stayed downstairs and found my way into one of the back pews. I knew father would like to be alone with his old organ. Only two candles were burning to the right and left of the organ, a bat flew through the

flickering light, the faint glow extended gradually far into the shadows of the vaulted roof and began to shimmer on the big cross on the altar. I saw everything, but I could not listen to father, I kept thinking all the time how often he had stood still going up the hill and how heavily he had breathed. I felt, but as if it were all very far away, that the whole church resounded as if all the stones sang with the organ. And all at once I noticed that father was playing a choral which he had lately lent the teachers for their society, a choral of Palestrina's: 'O sweet death, a life eternal follows thee.' And there he broke off abruptly. I went upstairs, went to him and bent over him. He was very pale and seemed as if lost, and when I called to him he murmured, 'Albrecht — where is Albrecht?' And then — (*Her voice breaks down.*)

Albrecht (*has risen and now lifts her up in his arms*).— Bess, you poor thing, I ought not to have asked it — I ought to have let you alone.

Elizabeth.— No, I can go on now. At home he felt better again.

Albrecht.— But you shall not go on. What follows I can imagine. The principal thing is that he is asleep.

Elizabeth.— Yes, he is asleep.

Albrecht.— And when did he fall asleep ——

Elizabeth.— About, about nine o'clock, it may have been.

Albrecht.— And now, it will soon be five. It will soon be daylight. And then everything will be better. You will see, all will be well. We will make him well, mother and you and I. I will that he shall be well, I will it, and I have always achieved everything that I willed. There, Bess! Perhaps it all had to happen this way. Perhaps I had to go through a night like last night. I had gone away from him and I had lost my way But now I am back again, now I will do for him. What will I not do! I will make him another Plato in place of this doughhead. I will carry him up the mountain. Why do you look at me so, Bess? Don't you believe me? You can believe me! This doesn't come from my anxiety, it comes from my need, from a fearful need. I need him! I need a man whom I venerate, a man who is tremendously strong and gentle at the same time, I need my father.

Elizabeth (*has listened to him with trembling lips and growing despair, and at the last word she goes to pieces*).

Albrecht (*catches her*).— What is the matter with you, Elizabeth? You are quite — it surely isn't — it can't be —(*Crying out*). Ah!

Elizabeth (*throws her arms around him*).— Forgive me, Albrecht —— forgive me!

Mrs. Herkner (*rushing in*).— What was that, children — children —

Albrecht (*wakening from his stupor, frees himself forcibly, rushes at the*

center door and pushes it open with both arms. Directly opposite them, lengthwise against the wall of the little room, stands the bed. On it lies JOHN HERKNER *in a black suit, covered up to his breast. Candles at his head and feet. Solemn stillness).*

Albrecht (sinks down before him, broken).— Father, O father!

ACT III

(The same room. A winter afternoon made dazzling by the reflection of the brilliant sunlight on the snow. Near the window the tops of fir trees heavily laden with snow. Bluish in the distance, defiant mountain peaks. On the writing-table lies a palm branch tied with broad, white ribbon. Near it, over a chair, are hung two or three smaller wreaths and a very large one made of laurel with golden berries, tied with a violet bow on which, in showy, big, gold letters, is: 'John Herkner, worthy, learned, and faithful custodian. From The Library.' *The table in front of the sofa is covered with a white cloth; on it, a little brown teakettle, simple tea things, two plates on which are rolls and cake. Everything clean and carefully arranged. The clock has been wound up and ticks softly.)*

MRS. HERKNER *and* ELIZABETH, *both in mourning, are at the window.*

MRS. HERKNER *is seated and with her right hand holds open the lower quarter of the window, which can be opened separately, in the old-fashioned way.*

ELIZABETH *stands behind her, her hands folded, her forehead pressed against the window pane.)*

Mrs. Herkner.— The bell is silent, it is over now.

Elizabeth (unfolding her hands and stepping back).— Over — father's burial. No longer here. No longer on the earth. But we are still here. And everything else is still here. And the sun is shining. My God, the sun is shining.

Mrs. Herkner (to herself, with resignation).— Over — my life! *(She restrains herself, rises and closes the window).*— And now we will close it — the little window — through which we have looked after him. The air is sharp and icy in spite of the sun, and already my Bess has coughed.

(The clock strikes)

Elizabeth.— Three o'clock — it lasted exactly one hour.

Mrs. Herkner.— Who wound up the clock again?

Elizabeth.— Albrecht — this morning.

Mrs. Herkner.— Tell me about it — how did he do it?

Elizabeth.— Exactly like father. He is even a little bit taller. He reached up easily.

Mrs. Herkner (*in a low tone*).— Exactly like father.

(*Pause*)

Elizabeth.— Mother, shall I talk or shall I keep still?

Mrs. Herkner.— Keep still? Why should you, my child? We will talk, of him and of everything, and not be the least bit sorrowful. Pray to him, but not weep.

Elizabeth.— I would so like to do something for you, mother!

Mrs. Herkner (*softly, at the same time seating herself at the writing-table*). — You do, Bess, when you are near me. Only don't leave me alone. When you do, to the right and left of me two walls grow up, higher and higher. You, with your clear head, can't comprehend this.

Elizabeth.— But I can. Sometimes I too stand before just such a wall.

Mrs. Herkner.— When you were both still little — when you needed help and had nobody but me; when I had to work hard for you all day long, but then, in return, took you in my lap in the evening. When children grow big they no longer approve of that.

Elizabeth.— They have grown heavy too, mother.

Mrs. Herkner.— Oh, when is a child too heavy for its mother?

Elizabeth (*slips gently into* MRS. HERKNER'S *lap for a moment, kisses her, and then stands up again*).— Is that what you want?

Mrs. Herkner (*says nothing, kisses the inside of the finger tips of her right hand*).

Elizabeth (*confused*).— What are you doing, mother! My silly hands!

Mrs. Herkner.— Your beautiful, slender hands.

Elizabeth.— Shall I boil the water for the tea? It can't be much longer, now, before all three will be back again.

Mrs. Herkner.— All three?

Elizabeth (*lighting the spirit lamp*).— Yes, Albrecht, Dr. Tachau, and Scheithammer.

Mrs. Herkner.— Is Scheithammer coming too?

Elizabeth.— He couldn't be induced not to.

Mrs. Herkner.— I wonder what sort of an address he made?

Elizabeth.— I'm glad that I didn't hear it. A lot of Bible texts and unction and unrestrained gestures. A good man and a bad musician, father would have said. And then again there are good musicians who are bad men. One doesn't know which one ought to prefer.

Mrs. Herkner.— I am so sorry for Albrecht, his having to submit

patiently to everything — the stares and handshaking and condolences. If it had not been for those things I would not have let myself be coaxed out of going with them, every step of the way. And of staying until the last minute. But to serve as a spectacle for others, to hear tactless people call me widow,— oh, that word is dreadful. No. Rather than that let me creep into a hole. Haven't you heard Mary come back?

Elizabeth.— Not yet. She won't hurry. What can you expect of her? Of course she has to allow herself to be properly pitied. And show off the new mourning hat she has received from us.

Mrs. Herkner.— I shall not get one for myself, I tell you that, right now. With the long veil, my old black one will do. Bend down a little, Bess, your collar has come open. The dressmaker didn't make it well, she always makes mistakes in finishing things.

Elizabeth.— She probably thinks we have no eyes for such things now, and the haste ——

Mrs. Herkner.— In three days she might have made it better. Three days ago — they carried him out then — in a black coffin. To the door. And the black wagon drove up the hill into the night. And Albrecht and Scheithammer followed it. Do you really think that Scheithammer will come back with him?

Elizabeth.— Of course he will.

Mrs. Herkner.— Then we need another cup.

Elizabeth.— I will get one at once.

Mrs. Herkner.— Get the blue one. Father's cup. Give it to Albrecht. Don't you think that he really looks very much like father? Especially when he sits still and looks up at one sidewise, you know?

Elizabeth.— I have not looked at him yet, with any thought of the resemblance.

Mrs. Herkner.— Is that so? It seems to me you look at him a great deal?

Elizabeth (*uneasily*).— Yes — but for something quite different.

Mrs. Herkner.— Do you know whether he will go back again soon?

Elizabeth.— Who knows what he will do?

Mrs. Herkner.— It would be hard for me. So long as he stays here one doesn't feel the emptiness so much. He sits in father's place, he speaks with father's voice — he has his father's voice, that is certain. You can't judge of that, because you didn't know father as a young man. But I still hear it so distinctly, as he used to read aloud to me. He read from the Prometheus Bound, a few days before Albrecht's birth, and I didn't at any time pay much attention, because I was running little blue ribbons in the baby's clothes. Did not pay attention! And now I try with such longing

to get back again every tone of his voice — in Albrecht's. If he would only stay here, just a little while. But I wouldn't ask him. (*There is a ring at the door bell.*)

Mrs. Herkner (*startled*).— There, you see — some one is coming, after all, and Mary's not here — and I suppose it's the wife of some prominent person or other, and the door will have to be opened.

Elizabeth (*as she goes out*).— Or, it may be a beggar.

Mrs. Herkner (*calling after her*).— If it is a beggar, give him a quarter. (*To herself in a low tone*). Hand out everything — give away everything. For whom shall I save now? But the children — his children!

Voices (*outside the door.* FLOHRKE'S *sharp and high pitched*).—The incident urgently demands an explanation ——

Elizabeth.— I beg you to wait just a moment — (*She enters hastily, a large visiting card in her hand.*) We have been taken by surprise, after all, mother. A gentleman from the library—there has been some mistake about the wreath; but it's nothing for you to bother about. I'll attend to it myself, in a few minutes. You stay in the other room here for a little while. (*She has pushed* MRS. HERKNER *through the middle door, which is left slightly open.*)

Elizabeth (*bids* FLOHRKE *enter*).— If you please!

Flohrke (*a man in the fifties, fashionably dressed, with a shining high hat and a mustache twisted into points*).— Permit me, Miss Herkner, first of all, to remark that I am a very tactful man. I would never have permitted myself to break in upon you at the present moment if the importance of the incident — the incomprehensible disappearance of the wreath — (*Perceiving it.*) Why there it is! How did it come here? And I had the whole dead-house thoroughly searched, the whole cemetery ——

Elizabeth (*has offered him a chair with a motion of the hand, and has herself taken a seat*).— It was delivered here an hour ago — with several others.

Flohrke.— Extraordinary! It should have been brought to me. I expressly charged the janitor to do so. Pardon me — but with all due respect, I must take the privilege of asking a question: didn't it actually occur to you to send this particular wreath on, immediately?

Elizabeth (*after a slight pause*).— We really did not — think of doing so.

Flohrke.— Very deplorable! Very deplorable! The ceremony suffered a decided loss thereby. And imagine yourself in my position. I was given leave of absence — although just at this time the light literature has to be removed from room ten to the new rooms, sixteen and seventeen. I traveled all night to be here, and now, here I am, the representative of a most prominent institution, if I may so speak, a person of importance in the

surprisingly large throng of mourners, here am I without any wreath. I have nothing to lay on the grave and cannot deliver my address.

Elizabeth.— But that was not brought to us.

Flohrke.— But they were linked together. The address was linked to the inscription on the wreath: 'John Herkner, the faithful guardian and worthy scholar'— and it closed with the words 'and so in the name of the library, I place'— and so on and so on.

Elizabeth (*with downcast eyes, somewhat ironically, to herself*).— And so on.

Flohrke.— You may believe me, I should have said excellent things. I wanted to explain this to your brother, but there was a man there, a so-called friend, who would not let me come near him. Regularly defended him, as if he were a fort. Tactless — un-Teutonic — you understand me. And immediately following the pastor's — how shall I designate it on the instant? — following his somewhat extravagant address with its touch of metaphysics, the modern scientific view of life would, to some extent, have found words through me.

Elizabeth.— It is not necessary for everything to find words, doctor ——

Flohrke.— A matter of opinion, madam. I am for lucidity — thoroughness. It was certainly very important to throw more light on the services of my honored predecessor in his abolition of the alphabetical system.

Elizabeth (*rising coolly*).— With all the sunlight for that, doctor? It is no longer necessary to light any little lamps.

Flohrke (*has also risen*).— May I beg that you will give me the wreath to take with me. To be sure, I cannot now take it to the place myself, for my train leaves at 4.15, or, if I am not mistaken, so early as 4.10. But I will find some man to take it ——

Mrs. Herkner (*comes in*).

Elizabeth (*astonished and somewhat frightened*).— Mama?

Mrs. Herkner.— I have a few words to say to the gentleman — won't you introduce him to me?

Elizabeth.— Dr. Augustus Flohrke ——

Florhke.— Walter Flohrke — Walter ——

Elizabeth.— My mother.

Flohrke (*with a deep bow*).— Ah — the respected widow — very much pleased — eh — much moved ——

Mrs. Herkner.— I heard through the door the subject under discussion. You will pardon me, doctor, but you have a very clear voice.

Flohrke (*flattered*).— I have often been complimented ——

Mrs. Herkner.— I am sorry you have taken so much trouble — have

taken so much trouble for nothing — for this wreath does not go onto my husband's grave.

Flohrke (*perplexed*).— My dear madam — the Library desires to do him honor in this way.

Mrs. Herkner.— No, doctor, the Library desires to do itself honor in this way. And the honor doesn't belong to it. It has — how do they put it? — paid poorly — what is on the ribbon? — the faithful guardian and the worthy scholar ruined his poor eyes in the old dark rooms. Now they are to be rebuilt. As wife of the living John Herkner, I have always been very meek. As the wife of the dead, I cannot be proud enough, and therefore I refuse this wreath a place on his grave.

Florke.— My dear madam, this, in comparison with all the others magnificent ——

Mrs. Herkner.— Magnificent! If they had only been kindhearted before! What must be my feelings at this magnificence. Look at the little ones, the poor little ones, made of fir and everlasting, they are from people who, perhaps, have eaten no dinner in order to give them, they have truly given them out of love. And I shall lay them on his grave, one beside the other, and they are the magnificent wreaths—and he would think so, too.

Flohrke (*assuming a lofty bearing*).— Honored madam! It would not become me at this hour to insist on who has been the one offended, my tact forbids that. Also, I am convinced that after more careful consideration

---

Elizabeth.— Your train leaves at 4.10, doctor.

Flohrke.— Very much obliged — should not have forgotten it. And so there only remains for me, ladies, to express my sincere sympathy in the heavy loss that has befallen you, and at the same time my admiration of the funeral services. Irreproachable! Considering the modest character of this locality, first class! I have the honor. (*Goes out.*)

Elizabeth.— I am only surprised that he did not say, 'For a third-class funeral.'

Mrs. Herkner.— Dear me, Elizabeth, my courage has left me again. I must have been too excited,— my heart beats so hard,— but I think I could not have allowed this trumpeting person to offer this thing to father. What do you think he would say about it?

Elizabeth.— That you were right, and that you had done well. How you can talk when it comes to the point!

Mrs. Herkner.— When it comes to the point.

Elizabeth (*has picked up the wreath*).— I'll put this out, but I'll bring some one else in to you, some one who came at the same time as that dandy from the library and is waiting outside in the hall,— old Eiblwieser.

Mrs. Herkner.— Eiblwieser,— the man to whose place father went so often in summer and drank coffee with him under the lindens, under his favorite tree. You may let him come in. Indeed, you may let in all the simple folk, any of the people. Only no learned men.

Elizabeth (*opens the door and calls out*).— Eiblwieser! Come here!

Eiblwieser (*an elderly peasant, his face furrowed from hard work, long, heavy mustache, and not unkindly beady little eyes. He wears long trousers, short, thick jacket, worn velvet vest with cheap buttons. He carries a stout stick and holds a fur cap in his hand. Before entering he ceremoniously wipes his boots off again on the strip of carpet in the hall*).— Excuse me — there's no gettin' rid of it, th' rascally snow. (*He comes in.*) God be wid ye, Mrs. Herkner. I was just wishin' t' be seein' how yous are, how everything does be goin' wid yous.

Mrs. Herkner.— Good afternoon, Eiblweiser. Sit down. You were at the funeral, too?

Eiblwieser (*sitting on the edge of the chair*).— Ye c'n belave I was. As I had a right t' be.

Mrs. Herkner.— Well, how was it?

Eiblwieser (*striking the crook of his cane with his hand, admiringly*).— Faith, it's iligunt it was! Th' people! An' the wraths! An' singin', there was! An' his Reverince spoke! Sure, nobody ever heard him spake like that afore. Sorra a one understood it, but sure it shtirred a body all over, an' a solemn occasion, it was, an' him astandin', as he did, up there on the hill from so airly until narely fure. They didn't so much as brathe hard, th' people. Iligunt it was! Faith, thin, annything like this does be bringin' th' people t'gither.

Mrs. Herkner.— Everybody loved him.

Eiblwieser (*gently tapping the air in front of him with his forefinger*).— Right ye are, Mrs. Herkner, right ye are! Sure, this was th' way of it: 't was himself loved the people and a body feels that. There was nothin' mane or small to himself. He was that inthrested in everythin'. 'Twas just like this: himself niver made any diff'rence whatever atween me ox and meself. An' that makes a body feel good. (*He rises.*)

Mrs. Herkner.— Do you have to go back home again so soon, Eiblwieser?

Eiblwieser.— Aye, we'll all be goin', slow like, one afther th' other. 'T is not fure o'clock yet, so I've a half hour yet, an' up at the tavern they'll be afther tappin' a fresh bar'l, afther the fun'ral. An' there's somethin' else I thought I'd be axin' ye, Mrs. Herkner.

Mrs. Herkner.— Well, what is it, Eiblwieser?

Eiblwieser.— If you happint to be havin' some old bits of clothes

belongin' t' himself, if you'd maybe think of me — th' young gentleman couldn't be wearin' thim things, with his figure — an' it's just grand they'd be for a stone mason. Ye know, a cloak or something warm ——

Mrs. Herkner.— I'll think of it, Eiblwieser, I'll look up something for you, but not just now. Now, the looking over all the things he used to wear makes me too sad.

Eiblwieser.— Sure, there's no hurry at all, at all, Mrs. Herkner. Th' on'y raison, I was tellin' ye, was because I'll not be comin' in here again very soon, th' roads are that bad, wi' them deep snowdhrifts packed down into 'em. It's a hard winter we're afther havin', sure there's no endin' t' 't, and a body does git fairly sickened wid it.

Mrs. Herkner.— I tell you what, Eiblwieser, I'll send it to you next week by the carrier woman.

Eiblwieser.— An' aftherwards I'll be payin' ye my thanks, that I will, Mrs. Herkner, and God's blissing be about ye. Iligunt it was, an' it's rale comfort ye c'n have in it. God be wid yous! (*Goes out into the hall.*)

Elizabeth (*who went out with the large wreath at the beginning of the conversation has returned without it, with a blue cup in her hand, and had listened to them both, looks after him*).— Look at him, look at him, good Eiblwieser. But a real peasant for all. Profits by it in some way, quickly, and sees to it that no one gets ahead of him.

Mrs. Herkner.— But that is so natural. And, too, it doesn't offend one. At least not me. If I had had it I would gladly have offered him some beer. Will there be enough to eat for the three men?

Elizabeth (*does not answer, listens for a sound outside*).— That is they — yes, and Scheithammer is with them, I hear his voice. Now, mother, keep control of yourself.

Mrs. Herkner.— Really, Albrecht has come back,— it is really over.

Elizabeth (*places herself near her and takes her hand*).

(*There is a knock*)

Elizabeth (*with a firm voice*).— Come in!

Albrecht (*comes in in a black coat, his face immovable and inscrutable. He says nothing, gives* ELIZABETH *his hand, kisses* MRS. HERKNER *on the forehead, and walks over to the writing-table. Silence.*)

Elizabeth (*breaks it*).— Did you come home alone?

Albrecht (*shakes his head*).

Elizabeth.— Where are the others?

Albrecht.— They are waiting outside.

Elizabeth.— Did you wish them to?

Albrecht.— They wished to.

Elizabeth.— Then I may call them in?

Albrecht.— As you wish.

Elizabeth (*opens the door,* SCHEITHAMMER *and* SIEGMUND *are standing in the hall talking to each other in low tones*).— Please come in — it is so cold out there.

Siegmund (*in the doorway in a low tone to her*).— We thought we would leave you quite alone together, at first ——

Elizabeth.—Please don't. To be alone with Albrecht is uncanny. Please come in, pastor.

Siegmund (*allows* SCHEITHAMMER *to enter first and then remains modestly standing at the door*).

Scheithammer (*still wearing his black official robes, easier than before in his bearing and with a firm resoluteness in his face, goes up to* MRS. HERKNER *and grasps both her hands*).— 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." (*Continues to speak with her in a low voice.*)

Elizabeth (*standing near* SIEGMUND).— How did Albrecht bear himself?

Siegmund.— Look at him! He stood at the grave like the god of death himself,— like a Hellenic Thanatos.

Elizabeth.— You are always admiring him.

Siegmund.— He always gives occasion for admiration by the spectacle of completeness which he presents.

Mrs. Herkner (*goes over to* ALBRECHT, *timidly*).—Aren't your feet cold, Albrecht?

Albrecht (*shakes his head, but does not speak*).

Mrs. Herkner.— There were some more wreaths sent by a few humble folk whom you do not know. One of them from a sick teacher has such a touching poem with it: He wishes he might succeed in sowing as much good in the hearts of the children as father did in the hearts of men. And this palm. The box was addressed to you — and there was a letter with it. (*She searches in the drawer of the writing-table.*)

Albrecht (*has taken up the branch*).— That is beautiful — that is the one beautiful thing.

Siegmund (*has drawn nearer with* ELIZABETH).— I believe that branch is from Miriam.

Albrecht (*quickly puts it down again*).

Elizabeth (*noticing this*).— Miriam is your sister?

Siegmund.— She is my sister. Or rather, my child. Any one whom one loves so devotedly one always looks upon as a child.

Elizabeth (*nods*).— I understand that. That's the way I felt about

my father. How often I have scolded him like a child!

Mrs. Herkner (*giving* ALBRECHT *the letter*).— Here, I have it.

Albrecht (*opens it, takes a little card from the envelope, glances over the few words, puts it in his breast pocket, walks over to the window, sits down with his back turned to every one and stares out*).

Mrs. Herkner (*turns round to the others*).— What is one to do with him? He does not talk — he seems as if he had ceased to live.

Elizabeth.— Let him alone, mother, let him alone.

Mrs. Herkner.— But he must eat something, must take something, and the gentlemen, too. Nothing but strain, nothing but emotional excitement. (*To* SIEGMUND.) You have run your feet off, have looked after everything for us,— please sit down. You are hungry, aren't you?

Scheithammer (*frankly*).— Yes, I am hungry.

Mrs. Herkner.— There, that's sensible, that does me good, an answer like that. Here is bread and butter and here is cake. To be sure, this time I did not make it myself, and Mary always uses too much flour. What may I give you, doctor?

Siegmund.— Tea — good, hot tea. The mountain air, here — for an indoor man like myself ——

Elizabeth (*pours out a cup of tea, puts milk and sugar into it and brings it over to* ALBRECHT).— Here Albrecht — you prefer to remain by yourself?

Albrecht (*in a low tone*).— Thank you! (*He puts the cup down near him on the window sill and does not touch it again.*)

Elizabeth (*returning, sits down between her mother, who has taken a seat on the sofa, and* SIEGMUND, *to whom she says*) The cemetery is beautifully situated — isn't it?

Siegmund.— Beautifully,— beyond description. The height, the loneliness, and behind it the line of demarcation made by the steep wall of rock. You know that the grave lies close to the foot of the mountain?

Elizabeth.— I know — Albrecht chose the spot.

Siegmund.— And with the exception of this natural black wall, everything, far and wide, white, snow white. A purity, a grandeur, and over it, this sun! Like the flaming heart of a divinity.

Scheithammer (*nods*).— Like the heart of God.

Siegmund.— It was not like a burial, it was like a resurrection.

(*Pause*)

Elizabeth.— And the music?

Siegmund.— That of Palestrina's! It was wonderful! 'O sweet death, by life eternal art thou followed.' One had to believe in it. Whether

they sang well or not, I know not. But the words seemed to hold me hovering in air, as if on white wings. They made the doors up yonder open.

Mrs. Herkner (*presses* SIEGMUND'S *hand*).

Scheithammer.— Nay, but they sung it well. They were all stirred by the fact that the deceased had, as it were, decided on his own funeral chant. How long ago is it that they got the music from him? The choir was the best thing there.

Siegmund.— I must contradict you there, Mr. Scheithammer. The best thing was your address. I think you ought to repeat some of it.

Scheithammer (*greatly alarmed*).— I? Repeat? You could do that easier than I, doctor. For me that is impossible.

Siegmund.— Why? It was certainly a carefully prepared address.

Scheithammer.— Yes — but the delivery of it in itself — I cannot do it.

Siegmund.— I didn't notice that you couldn't at the funeral.

Scheithammer.— I didn't do it at all well.

Siegmund.— Then you'll do it better the second time.

Scheithammer (*rising*).— I must persist in asserting that it is not possible for me. The sway of the moment is wanting.

Albrecht (*speaking from the window*).— Try it, anyhow, Scheithammer.

Siegmund.— Can't you read it?

Scheithammer.— Read It? That would have no convincing effect.

Mrs. Herkner.— Don't torment our pastor. I am content if I know that he has spoken lovingly of John. What do you think about it, Elizabeth?

Elizabeth (*slowly*).— I think that the funeral address was delivered much less for strangers than for us. I think that, where there is the desire there is the strength to carry it out. I think that the pupil of John Herkner ought to be ashamed before his wife, to be so little capable of conquering externalities from within, outward.

Siegmund (*half to himself*).— Great Scott — that rings!

Mrs. Herkner (*reproachfully*).— But Bess! You are so severe!

Scheithammer (*goes over to* ELIZABETH).— Miss Elizabeth, in the gospel of St. John, it is written, 'For he indeed knew what was in man.' Much that you seem to look upon with your eyes as weakness is only humility. But I will make the attempt. At the risk of a lost impression for you — and for me. (*He goes to the back of the room, takes out a few loose sheets and glances over them.*)

Siegmund (*in an undertone to the women*).— He spoke in a way to make one wonder whether the man would remain a Catholic priest much longer. And it was good that no one dared to say another word after he stopped. To be sure, a gentleman from the library showed a great desire

Elizabeth.— The man was here.

Siegmund.— Is that so? Then you know enough. I had to fight to keep him down. I hope you smiled at him.

Elizabeth.— I did indeed, doctor, tragi-comedy — all of it.

Scheithammer (*standing in the center of the room*).— You must permit me to begin at the very beginning. Even permit me to say what is out of place here. But otherwise, I cannot go on with it.

Siegmund (*has risen and placed a chair before* SCHEITHAMMER *on which* SCHEITHAMMER *can lay his hands*).— Courage, Mr. Scheithammer. Per aspera ad astra.

Scheithammer (*still confused, and hesitating*).— Mourners and those who share in our sorrow! In accordance with the inscrutable — inscrutable decrees of God we have had to gather here — to accompany John Herkner to his last rest. To ac — accompany him to his rest. (*He stops.*)

Elizabeth (*coldly, to* SIEGMUND).— That's what they say for everybody.

Siegmund (*to* ELIZABETH).— Just wait.

Scheithammer (*has caught* ELIZABETH'S *look. He draws himself up a little and continues with an energy drawn from righteous anger*).— Mourners and sharers in our sorrow, I have called you. But we may well all mourn a man — a human being — who at the end of his days could say, Lord, I have injured no man.

Elizabeth (*lifts her eyes to him, touched and begging pardon*).

Scheithammer (*accepts the look; from this moment on, with inner freedom and dignity of expression he, as it were, lays his words down before her.*)— And yet sorrow came to him, as to every one who has been born of the body. But he had perceived the Christ secret of love, the salt of earth had never spoiled the dew of heaven for him, and he continued to be noble without weariness and grew wise without bitterness.

Mrs. Herkner (*deeply moved, to herself*).— He was like that — he was like that.

Scheithammer.— He early learned to change desire into renunciation, and from the man who created he became the man who knew; from a wanderer, a keeper of a tower. On great heights and in loneliness he worked out the rest of his days, unseen and unknown by the busy wayfarers in the streets. It was but seldom that some one raised his head to hear the old man's evening psalm. They did not hear him, not with their ears, but their souls will be aware of the stillness, and they who were deaf in the daytime will listen eagerly in the night — in the life after death they will listen eagerly.

Elizabeth (*has turned her eyes toward* ALBRECHT *and endeavors to penetrate his impassive face, which is turned toward* SCHEITHAMMER).

Scheithammer (*with perfect confidence and power*).— For nothing born of the spirit here can die. Intangible, invincible, it is ever at work, beyond all knowledge, beyond all experience, to-day as in days past, it works toward the welfare and redemption of the world made manifest in faith in God and immortality! O sweet death, by life eternal art thou followed! (*He turns away with emotion and thoughtfully comtemplates 'The Interment.'*)

Siegmund (*in a low voice to* ELIZABETH).— Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus! That's the way it affects one, isn't it? Only it seems to me, he ought to have spoken of Albrecht.

Elizabeth.— He did speak of him.

Mrs. Herkner (*has risen and draws* SCHEITHAMMER *forward*).—That was — like the palm branch — dear pastor. It would have pleased him. No, it pleases him, I know.

Elizabeth (*giving him her hand*).— I beg your pardon, Mr. Scheithammer.

Mrs. Herkner.— And now, surely we can go to the grave, Elizabeth and I, now surely no one else will be up there.

Siegmund.— Do you want to go to-day? There is something — something very urgent.

Mrs. Herkner.— I must know where he lies, I must know where he sleeps. And we will take these few wreaths to him and the branch ——

Elizabeth.— That is heavy. Albrecht can take it up to-morrow.

Albrecht.— To-morrow? But I am going with you now.

Mrs. Herkner.— I beg of you, don't go, Albrecht. We don't expect you to go a second time. And you are looking so pale, too. When I think of it, I wonder whether we can leave you alone. And you have let your tea stand.

Siegmund.— Your mother is quite right. It's easily seen by a glance at you that you are done for. If only I could accompany the ladies. But I must leave on the 4.10 — to-morrow morning there is a meeting of the editorial staff, Providence having so willed it!

Scheithammer.— May I go with you? I have a baptism sometime this evening, but until then ——

Mrs. Herkner.— We'll be back long before dark. We shall be grateful if you will go with us, dear pastor.

Albrecht.— Very well, go with them, but I am going too. I am going with mother and sister when they go to father's grave for the first time. I am going!

Elizabeth (*who has listened without speaking until now, to* SCHEITHAMMER). — Perhaps you will gowith the doctor into Albrecht's room for a few minutes? And mother, go get ready. I will see what I can do with him.

Mrs. Herkner (*with the wreaths on her arm, goes out into the hall, followed by* SCHEITHAMMER *and* SIEGMUND).

Elizabeth (*after a short pause*).— Tell me, Albrecht — whom is your obstinacy going to please in any way? Father? You have come too late for that. Mother and me? We are going to the place which from to-day on will be our favorite spot. So what is the sense of this hard 'I am going'?

Albrecht.— The first time I wish to be with you. The first impression — the fresh grave in the white field of snow — mother might faint — or you.

Elizabeth (*indignantly*).— We are not that kind, and you know it perfectly well. And, Albrecht, we saw him die. Nothing can happen to compare with that. And although it was the easiest death possible, a catching of the breath and a bowing of the head — the instant when life ceased — the person who has died with some one at that moment — what can the grave be to that person, however fresh and however black it may be?

Albrecht.— But I wish to be with you, I wish to go with you, for my own sake — and for the sake of others.

Elizabeth.— Of others? What others? What sort of paltry lies and subterfuges are these? When have we ever cared for others? Listen to me, Albrecht. There is not the least sense in doing too much all at once because you have done too little before. There is not the least sense in running with naked feet over the bridge of swords of these days of pain. What shall we gain from your cutting the soles of your feet into shreds?

Albrecht (*turning away from her*).—Well, Elizabeth, this does one man good, and that another.

Elizabeth (*goes up to him with a peremptory look in her eyes*).— What does you good, Albrecht? You go around like one damned. We are sad, you are inconsolable. We can laugh, mother and I, at the motley of death, for even death wears the motley, only it, too, is black. You only stare into vacancy, and everything that is said to you or done for you sinks into you, noiselessly, as if into freezing water. You have not been wounded, you have been poisoned. And what you carry around with you now is not grief, it is torment.

Albrecht (*trying to laugh*).— Pshaw, Bess, you would make any one laugh!

Elizabeth (*alarmed at his tone*).— Albrecht, don't! Not that way! You had better be silent. (*She looks out of the window.*) Like the snow outside there. It shines, sparkles, almost blazes in the sunlight, but the sun cannot melt it. Cannot melt it. And there is still so much light around you, and there is still so much love around you. We — your friend ——

Albrecht (*losing his tension for an instant*).— If he were only gone! If he were only gone!

Elizabeth (*in the greatest amazement*).— Gone? He who loves you so — idolizes you — him, too, you do not love? Nobody? Nothing? Wholly unloving — wholly unloving. What are we all to you, then? Only stones on which you stand? Conditions of existence — worthless to your existence? (*She turns away from him, hopelessly.*) The wall, the unsurmountable wall. It cannot be flown over, it cannot be broken through. I cannot spy out what you are concealing from me, and covering over like a bloody track. Father could have done it. He had a hand for even so dark a heart as yours. And he is no longer here, can no longer help. Could not wait for you. O father, you sheep, why are you gone?

Albrecht (*bends over her, stirred*).— Elizabeth, he did wait. He is still waiting. And — I am coming to him. What was it Scheithammer said? For nothing that has been born of the spirit can die. Shall I stay with you?

Elizabeth (*folds her hands*).— If you could do it — for mother, for the hardest time is still to come for her — only a few weeks ——

Albrecht.— A few months — or even longer. What is long? Only the end is long. That is eternal.

Mrs. Herkner (*with hat and cloak on, opens the door*).— It will be too late to go, children.

Elizabeth.— I'll be ready in a moment. And he is good and will stay here.

Siegmund (*who has entered the room behind* MRS. HERKNER, *hat in hand and overcoat over his arm*).— How is it now, Albrecht? May I spend the last half hour with you? I had a few important things to say — very important. My bag has been sent to the station, I have only to jump onto the train.

Mrs. Herkner.— Then we shall not see you again.

Siegmund.— Hardly, Mrs. Herkner. I shall have to say good by to you, now, and thank you for having taken me in as if I belonged to you.

Mrs. Herkner.— May God keep you a friend to Albrecht, Dr. Tachau. More I cannot say.

Elizabeth (*going out with her*).— Give my greetings to your sister.

Albrecht and Siegmund (*accompany the two women to the door*).

Mrs. Herkner (*to* ALBRECHT).— What would you have? I am going to say good night to father — only a little earlier than usual.

Albrecht (*after the door has closed, breathing deeply*).— Well, we have come this far. (*He nods to himself.*) These are things which one must have experienced in order to comprehend them.

Siegmund.— What's the use? I am not curious.

Albrecht (*does not answer, looks away into the distance*).

Siegmund (*has laid his hat and overcoat on a chair and now sits down, himself, on the sofa*).— Aren't you tired? We probably stood up there two good hours, I should say.

Albrecht (*walking slowly up and down*).— No, no! They were — two good hours.

(*Pause*)

Siegmund (*leaning back*).— The first thing that attracted my attention when I came into this room last evening (*pointing to the harmonium*) was that corner. That you have taken over into your world.

Albrecht.— Yes — unconsciously.

(*Pause*)

Siegmund.— Two remarkable human beings — your mother and your sister. So much grief and so little lamentation. I have not seen either of them shed a tear.

Albrecht.— When they are alone they will probably weep their fill.

Siegmund.— Your sister has something of Antigone about her.

Albrecht.— Yes. There is something in her. He is in her.

Siegmund.— Will you use the death mask you have made for the monument?

Albrecht.— The monument? I had not thought of it at all. I can't do that.

Siegmund.— A wonderful head. With the expression of a blind seer. Well, at any rate, when are you going to begin to work again?

Albrecht (*at the window, absent-mindedly*).— Work — I? What for? Can you see the cross up there on the ridge of the mountain?

Siegmund (*changes his eyeglasses, leans forward*).— I can hardly see the mountain.

Albrecht.— I would like to climb as high as that once more, to draw a deep, perfectly free breath. Wasn't there once an emperor who took all his crowns from his head and locked himself in a monk's cell?

Siegmund.— What makes you think of that?

Albrecht.— He must also have found everything he had achieved not worth the labor; all experience not worth having lived for; all the blood-red magnificence not worth a handful of white snow from a grave.

Siegmund (*bends forward over the table*).—Oh, ho, so we are on that track! You, Albrecht! You must not fail to change the switch. In the

garden house on Palace Street two figures are waiting for you. Waiting to be given full life by the hands of their lord and master. And day before yesterday, at noon, two men were there to inspect them. The rich and the mighty. And if one was loud in his praises the other was silently stirred. I was to convey and communicate to you that: You are to receive the means for their execution in marble and the finished work is to go as a gift to the New Museum. The director gives me the assurance that it will be set up alone in the last dome room. Alone! Do you know what that means?

Albrecht (*has turned toward him, blood in his cheeks, sparkle in his eyes, forgetting everything, he breaks out*).— In marble — Lord God in heaven, in marble! To be able, for once, to show what I am capable of; to be able, for once, to measure my work with everything great that has ever been created, to bring out its whole strength, its whole effect — you cobbler, you have no suspicion of what that means. To feel the marble — the marble under the chisel — the Lord God's own stone — I shall go mad! To pay back in gold what has been given me in pennies, as one, to see oneself united with all, born upward and bearing upward, that is the goal, satisfaction, deliverance (*falling from his ecstasy, the light dying out of his eyes, his face sallow, dully, to himself*), and the return.

Siegmund (*has risen, much moved*).— Yes, my boy, above all, the return. Turn the key on what you have lived through here, lay your wreath down before the sober beauty of death, and return to your light, to your air, your ability to laugh. Metaphor aside, you must sleep in your own bed again. Only the right kind of night gives the right kind of day. But that will be a day! That will be an immortality, a bodily immortality, such as the parson has never even dreamed of. And on the day when I shall have to force my way through hundreds of men to see your work, on that day I shall be content and reconciled with fate. One man has attained and that one is my dearest friend. Well, my boy?

Albrecht (*without stirring*).— I thank you, Siegmund.

Siegmund.— Me? What for? Return thanks, rather, to your own gifted nature.

Albrecht.— But it would not have gone to the director. It would not have talked to the rich fellow. To you alone I owe all, to your goodness and to your loyalty, which I have been putting in my pocket for years, like apples from a neighbor's tree. But to-day it ends, and to-day I will give you back everything.

Siegmund.— Are you crazy? I have had ten times more from you than you have ever had from me.

Albrecht (*bitterly*).— Do you think so? After all, I know better.

But now, I can take no more. I thank you — and do you go to the people and say to them that I will not do it, and cannot do it, and never will do it.

Siegmund (*pale as a corpse*).— Albrecht! Albrecht! Why won't you? Why can't you? What has gotten into you? Are you going to give up your art? Ruin your future? Your whole life?

Albrecht (*out of deep emotion*).— O Sieg, perhaps I must die in order to be able to live again!

Siegmund.— Have you turned into a fool? The most fully alive, thoroughly healthy, vital human being who ever led existence a fine dance, and all at once overthrown. Why? One can surely mourn, honestly and heartily, without cutting one's own throat on the spot. What are you going to do, then?

Albrecht.— Stay here.

Siegmund.— What for? To lay yourself down on the grave like a faithful poodle, to eat nothing and drink nothing until you die? Forgive me, to but hear such nonsense from you is enough to drive one raving mad. Rub your eyes, Albrecht, give yourself a push, up with you, you see the promised land ——

Albrecht.— And do not reach it. I know.

Siegmund (*indignantly*).— Because you are paralyzed, a weakling.

Albrecht (*clenches his fist*).— Do you think so? I have just thrashed a man who — he defended himself well. What if the mountains seem higher to me than your highest snail shells? What if doglike fidelity impresses me more strongly than the whole Albrecht Herkner of the past?

Siegmund (*buttons up his coat, laughing bitterly*).— I see you, in time, going to confession and munching the consecrated bread. (*He pulls on his overcoat and takes his hat in his hand.*) But why do we get angry at each other? In a few weeks — and a few weeks don't matter much — you will be your old self.

Albrecht.— Not in a few years, and not as long as I live! Rather would I go to confession.

Siegmund.— And that is to be the end? You sever yourself from your life work, from yourself, from me, for I feel that you also want to be rid of me. What is behind this? And I don't believe you!

Albrecht (*mechanically*).— Why not?

Siegmund (*pointing out the window*).— Because the spirit of that grave is not your spirit, and because you can't make a lion into a louse.

(*The clock strikes four*)

Four! Off, once more! This time, away from you! Must I go this way? You will let me go this way? (*Beseechingly.*) Albrecht!

Albrecht.— No! (*He makes a movement to accompany him.*)

Siegmund (*presses his hat down over his forehead, beside himself*).— Then stay! Stay right here! Don't go with me! And may you — never rue the day of the funeral! (*He rushes out, the outside hall door is heard to slam shut.*)

Albrecht (*stands alone. He draws* MIRIAM'S *little card out of his breast pocket. Reading it over in a low tone*).— 'And when it can no longer be the same as the first time, then the last time shall have been.' (*He lifts the palm branch and presses it to his lips for a long time.*) The last time! (*The sunlight in the window dies away.*)

ACT IV

(JOHN HERKNER'S *study. Entirely unchanged, except that the writing-table has been carefully cleared off, and in the center of it, on a black velvet cushion, is the death mask. Through the window is seen the midday sunshine of a clear spring day.*)

Elizabeth (*in a gray dress, is surrounding the death mask with a garland of spring flowers*).— Snowdrops and primroses, white, like little clouds, and golden, like stars. And yet they come up out of the deep, black earth. O father, spring is here! (*There is a gentle knock on the door leading into the hall.*)

Elizabeth (*astonished, turns her head*).—That must be — come in!

Scheithammer (*enters. He wears a black coat, carries his hat in his hand, is carefully brushed*).— I wish you good morning, Miss Elizabeth.

Elizabeth.— Good morning, Mr. Scheithammer. How does this happen? You haven't been to see us for a long time.

Scheithammer.— I have had a number of serious and important affairs to settle, Miss Elizabeth.

Elizabeth.— Do you know that I recognized you by your knock?

Scheithammer.— Really? Oh, how friendly of you, Miss Elizabeth!

Elizabeth.— Do sit down. And how fine you are to-day! That beautiful black coat! Do you want to inspire me with respect?

Scheithammer.— Most certainly not! I want rather to show my respect for you.

Elizabeth.— O Mr. Scheithammer! That you have always done. In any coat. And yet, you are right. Respect may be shown even by a coat. You see, I am wearing gray in the house now. I noticed that the everlasting black made Albrecht quite melancholy.

Scheithammer.— You are such an admirable sister, Miss Elizabeth.

Elizabeth.— Not by a long way! Shall I ever become what I might be? My intentions are most honorable, but the task is so laborious!

Scheithammer.— What does the Bible say of our life? And have our years been precious to us, yet have they been labor and sorrow.

Elizabeth.— Not only the Bible says that. (*Taking up a large magazine from the writing-table.*) The *Art Leader* came to-day, with a long article on Albrecht and a number of illustrations of his works. About most of them I knew nothing at all; but even those that I did know, I understand quite differently in their larger relations to all the others. With all the ruggedness and sternness, nothing small, nothing half way. And how the man must have worked! It's easy to see, here, how it was not possible for him to have the heart for anything else. (*Turns over the leaves.*) Look at this — and this — and this — the fighting king — and here — the awakening bride — isn't that beautiful?

Scheithammer.—Beautiful — it may be. But for my taste, it is all too passionate.

Elizabeth (*closes the magazine*).— You don't like it?

Scheithammer.— No, Miss Elizabeth. Passion destroys the world, for it destroys order. And the existence of all morality depends upon order.

Elizabeth.— But can there be anything great without passion?

Scheithammer.— Greatness lies only in truth.

Elizabeth (*sighs deeply and looks down dejectedly. Pause*).

Scheithammer.— Your dear brother is not at home?

Elizabeth.— No.

Scheithammer.— And your dear little mother?

Elizabeth.— Dear me, Mr. Scheithammer — don't talk like a phrase book. I have a mother, a mamma, a mummy, if you like—but not a little mother. Where is mother sure to be? At the cemetery.

Scheithammer.— It fills one with the greatest satisfaction to recognize in such fidelity the power of the holy sacrament of matrimony.

Elizabeth.— Do you preach to-morrow, Mr. Scheithammer?

Scheithammer.— No, Miss Elizabeth. (*After several fresh starts.*) And I have come to inform you — that I shall not to-morrow — and probably never again!

Elizabeth.— Mr. Scheithammer! Can this be true?

Scheithammer.— Yes, Miss Elizabeth. And before arriving at this truth, truth for me, I have had to make a long, long pilgrimage and walk in many wrong paths. May I conduct you past a few of the landmarks?

Elizabeth (*with closed eyes*).— Please do. I am listening.

Scheithammer.— I was very young when I decided to become a priest.

Of my own free will, as I thought. I could not realize, then, how we are coerced by our immediate and daily environment, above all when that is a strict Catholic family. Nature seemed to me, at that time, beneath me, asceticism alone seemed holy. And, even as a lad, I despised everything pertaining to the body, so much so that I would have preferred to live without food and drink. Despised everything pertaining to the body. But I don't know, Miss Elizabeth, whether I ought to continue to speak so frankly to you.

Elizabeth.— You as a human being can have nothing to say to me as a human being which I ought not to hear.

Scheithammer.— You see, Miss Elizabeth, no one should become a priest who has not first been a man, for he cannot know what he has so solemnly promised. I began to feel my loneliness, that of the soul was as hard to bear as that of the body. My imaginative faculty became ill, I had hard and ugly temptations, I had to be severe with my moral nature in order to escape my physical. And still I continued to shun the truth. Then I learned to know your father. How shall I tell you of this? No book can be so wise as a wise man. He taught me how the eternal core is to be distinguished from the temporal garment. And my priesthood is only a temporal garment, one in which I can remain neither physically nor spiritually healthy and virtuous. I must lay it aside, I must begin a new life, and I pray God that in this new life I may find the complement that is necessary to it; a noble and sincere life companion.

Elizabeth (*rising*).— You have entered upon a difficult task in this, Mr. Scheithammer.

Scheithammer.— The most difficult part is past; the decision. The archbishop, to whom I went two months ago, refused, indeed, to listen to me. My vows could not be loosed. Now I shall go to Rome, to our Holy Father.

Elizabeth.— And if he, too ——

Scheithammer.— Then I must carry through without his consent what I should prefer to do with his consent. Do you think differently?

Elizabeth.— Oh no, I am glad of this!

Scheithammer (*takes a deep breath*).— And now, I have something else to say, Miss Elizabeth, the most difficult of all.

Elizabeth.— Mr. Scheithammer, Mr. Scheithammer, not too much at once.

Scheithammer.— How shall I begin, Miss Elizabeth, how shall I set myself before you in the right light, and yet in not too good a light? Better in somewhat too poor a one. Oh dear, I should not have come to you in my Sunday coat, it would have been better to come in my workday jacket, in which I am still less beautiful. And then, inside! In general, I am a

peace-loving man, but on bad calendar days I can be impatient and irritable for two. I smoke a pipe, I wear such boots, sometimes I drink more of the noble barley wine than is consistent with the virtue of temperance. After all this, dare I still venture to speak what is in my mind — how highly I respect you, how greatly I love you, and how much I believe I have need of you?

Elizabeth (*looks down, moved*).— That means that you wish to marry me? But shall we not sit down again? Anything like this must be carefully considered. (*She sits down on the sofa,* SCHEITHAMMER *sits opposite her*). First of all, Mr. Scheithammer, do you know how old I am? Mother imagines — and has perhaps said at some time that I am twenty-eight. But I am thirty. We had better say thirty-one, for I shall be that in a few weeks. That is scarcely a year younger than you are.

Scheithammer.— What difference does that make?

Elizabeth.— And do you know that I am not at all pious? That I even treat the good God very badly sometimes?

Scheithammer.— I know that you are a weak Christian, but a strong human being.

Elizabeth.— And on what are this strong human being who has nothing and another strong human being who also has nothing going to live?

Scheithammer.— But I have something, Miss Elizabeth. And what's the good of my being able to work? I have recently finished a book on reform within the church, and have even found a publisher for it. We could live.

Elizabeth.— Then these were all imaginary obstacles. Now, however, comes a real one. I do not love you enough.

Scheithammer.— I thought so. Not enough, you say. Don't you think that gradually, out of kindness, out of compassion ——

Elizabeth.— Out of compassion? Would you want that?

Scheithammer.— Before all else I seek psychical union with you—the friendship of your heart.

Elizabeth.— That you have. But that is surely not sufficient for marriage. (*She has opened the magazine, turned the leaves, and now gazes at one of the pictures.*) The awakening bride ——

Scheithammer.— What do you think your father would have said to it?

Elizabeth.— Father was very fond of you.

Scheithammer.— And your mother?

Elizabeth.— Oh, mother would advise me to do it, that I know.

Scheithammer.— Then, after all, it would be the most reasonable thing to do.

Elizabeth.— Oh dear, if it were only the most unreasonable?

Scheithammer.— I have come to beg you, not to urge you, Miss Elizabeth. When you have found your peace again ——

Elizabeth.— I have not lost it, in the least ——

Scheithammer.— When you have asked your family for their advice ——

Elizabeth.— Shall I do that?

Scheithammer.— May I call on you again in an hour?

Elizabeth.— In an hour! What is an hour! But it shall be as you wish, Mr. Scheithammer. Come back again in an hour. Perhaps then I shall have a straightforward answer for you.

Scheithammer.— Dear Elizabeth! (*Kisses her hand timidly.*) God be with you! (*He goes.*)

Elizabeth (*alone. She heaves a sigh*).— Not enough — is not at all. (*Looks in the mirror over the sofa.*) What do you say to this? That we are both dusty. (*Walks slowly over to the writing-table and looks at the death mask.*) Well, father, don't you know what to do for me? Don't your boy know what to do for me? Your great, tall, sad boy! My God, I too know not what to do for him! (*She walks over to the dark corner, to the harmonium, sits down with her elbows on it, and buries her head in her hands.*)

Mrs. Herkner (*comes through the hall door, in hat and cloak. She stands still on the threshold and asks in a voice that trembles a little*).—Is any one here?

Elizabeth (*rises and comes forward*).— Of course, some one is here. Bess is here. So late, mother?

Mrs. Herkner (*comes all the way in*).—How stupid I am, Bess. I only called because I thought he must come to me from over by the window. In his brown coat, with his handkerchief hanging out of his pocket. Day and night I keep waiting for that. Oh dear, it grows harder and harder.

Elizabeth (*takes off her hat and cloak*).— Did Ellen, the tailor's wife, carry your basket of flowers for you?

Mrs. Herkner.— Yes, all the way to the gate, then I sent her away. She is fortunate. She believes so firmly that she will see her husband again. 'And do you know, Mrs. Herkner,' she said to me, 'that I am solemnly convinced that my Alois sews on the doctor's buttons and cleans the spots off his clothes, up there, just as he did down here?'

Elizabeth.— Was it beautiful at the cemetery?

Mrs. Herkner.— So beautiful! I can't tell you how beautiful it was! So still and light! To be sure the ground was so wet you sank into it. There were little brooks running over everything. I took away the withered wreaths, tidied up the grave, and planted all the snowdrops. It is all covered with them, all white. I should like best to have it stay like that. And no stone, and no monument. Who knows what sort of a silly, modern thing Albrecht will put there.

Elizabeth.— Albrecht is to make it?

Mrs. Herkner.—Who else? He promised me to do it. And Mr. Scheithammer is to write the inscription. Oh, to be sure, I met Mr. Scheithammer on the stairs. He always does me good. Such a pleasant man! And how attached he was to papa! It's such a shame that he is a priest and that his name is Conrad.

Elizabeth.— But, mother, his name is Lewis.

Mrs. Herkner.— Is that so? But he looks exactly like a Conrad. You know I can never remember names, and so I give people names like their faces.

Elizabeth.— And if you were not right about the clergyman, too,— what then?

Mrs. Herkner.— Dear me, Bess, one ought not to say such things to you, I know, but he would have been a good husband for you.

Elizabeth.— You don't say so!

Mrs. Herkner.— With him I would know you were well taken care of, when some of these days I must go away.

Elizabeth.— But the end of his nose does not please me. Nor what follows behind it.

Mrs. Herkner.— That would come in the course of time. A woman like you doesn't marry a man for the first five years, but for the last twenty.

Elizabeth.— That is, I would be a married old maid.

Mrs. Herkner.— What are you thinking about? What do you think that marriage is?

Elizabeth.— What is it? Something that one can only know when one has had it. Something wholly inexpressible. Didn't you have it?

Mrs. Herkner (*after a pause*).— I did have it, Elizabeth. But I had still more of sorrow and care. And they, I think, must have made me forget it. And it was long, long ago. For him I would, at this moment, live my life over again from the beginning. But for my child I want something different. And much that he became reconciled to, I never. Perhaps I was not the right person for him — perhaps I was, but only for a time.

Elizabeth.— Mother, I know better than that.

Mrs. Herkner.— Why do I now seem to myself so useless, so superfluous? What can I do for him now? Not even put his letters and diaries in order, to say nothing at all of his work. And, you see, it tortures me, too, that his work is not carried on. You promised me that the book should be published. Albrecht promised me that everything would be done that could be done for father's legacy. He stayed here for that purpose. And now he doesn't bother himself about anything and all day

long he climbs around on the most dangerous parts of the mountain, and the next thing, we know, he'll break his neck.

Elizabeth (*who has stood still, sunk in deep thought*).— Father's legacy, mother, what is father's legacy, really? Is it not something quite other than the book?

Mrs. Herkner.— What can it be, then?

Elizabeth.— Albrecht, mother! Sit still, mother, sit still. Now, at last, I know, I can understand and put into words what has been forcing itself upon my thoughts so much for the last few weeks. You see, mother, father was fond of me, but Albrecht he loved. Not because he was a man, not because he was his son, but because he embodied that force which his mind regarded as the highest, the creative force. He was to him the continuation and fulfillment of his own existence, and even the time when they met here in hostility, what a beloved enemy he saw in him!

Mrs. Herkner.—An enemy who caused him so much sorrow, hurt him so.

Elizabeth (*kneeling down by her and throwing her arms around her*).— Mummy! My own little mummy, no one is ever buried who has not been sinned against, and we all need grace in order to be saved. I never asked you before, mother, what you —what hour in your life you could never be reconciled to. Wasn't it the one when father laid away his music and locked his grand piano? Because he did not want a little and all seemed to him unattainable. Perhaps to every one there comes at some time a danger like that. And Albrecht is in danger. He seems to me like a man who, having gone half the way, lies down in the snow to sleep, he thinks,—to die, we know. But we will not allow that, you won't and I won't and father won't.

Mrs. Herkner (*presses her head to her breast*).— My child, my John's child, no, I have not forgotten what I did have,— all the depth, the largeness, the ineffableness, and now, I see him again — I see him as he was. But, Elizabeth, what is to be done?

Elizabeth (*concealing her emotion under a laugh*).— Mother dear, I haven't the least suspicion. I only believe that he must go away from here. Anywhere where he will work the skin off his hands. (*Rises.*)

Mrs. Herkner.— He can't do that here?

Elizabeth.— No! As I told you, here he is falling asleep. Here, something is lacking — a man or a woman, I don't know. I think I hear him, mother.

Mrs. Herkner (*gathers her things together quickly*).— Then I'll leave you alone with him. And do what you like. Do it as you like. You will make no mistake, you will not do any wrong. (*Kisses her on the forehead and goes hurriedly out through the center door.*)

Elizabeth (*alone, presses her hands to her heart*).— Only be calm, don't be excited; men can't endure that. Can they, father dear? And send me a key to heaven.*

Albrecht (*comes in from the hall, in mountain shoes, leather trousers, and gray jacket. He has in his hand a hunter's hat, which he puts down at once. He has grown somewhat thinner and therefore looks taller. His face is very serious, but no longer gloomy, rather somewhat melancholy*).— Good afternoon, Bess. Has the postman come?

Elizabeth.— Good afternoon, Albrecht. (*She gives him the magazine and a few envelopes from the table.*) These and the *Art Leader.* I opened it. Not entirely by mistake. I saw that there was an article on you in it.

Albrecht.— An obituary notice, as it were, probably. (*He glances rapidly over the envelopes and throws them to one side, one after another unopened.*) Nothing — nothing —nothing. (*Opening the last.*) Who writes this scrawl? My goodness, it's from Moedl! (*He reads.*)

Elizabeth.— Is that Franz Moedl, the wood-carver, Moedl's youngster, that good for nothing?

Albrecht (*reading*).— He did very well with me.

Elizabeth.— Did you see the envelope? A dove with a forget me not in his beak. Such bad taste.

Albrecht (*glances at it a moment*).— Good soul.

Elizabeth.— What does he write?

Albrecht.— You'll have to wait a moment until I find out. (*Studying.*) A-d-l-adl-i-e- oh,— that must be meant for *atelier.* (*He reads to the end and then allows his hands with the sheet in them to sink onto the table.*) So it goes.

Elizabeth.— Well?

Albrecht.— He has a new position in view, with another sculptor, and a notice has been sent that the atelier must be vacated — and the house is to be torn down in the fall.

Elizabeth.— What are you going to do about it?

Albrecht.— I don't know yet.

Elizabeth (*touches the sheet with the tip of her finger*).— What is that down there — right on the edge of the sheet?

Albrecht.— What?

Elizabeth (*reads*).— Miss Mira helps me every day.

Albrecht (*draws the letter away hastily, folds it up and puts it in his pocket. In a low tone, to himself*).— She still helps.

Elizabeth.— Aren't you going to read the article about yourself?

Albrecht.— It doesn't interest me.

Elizabeth.— And your other letters?

*Literal translation of the German name for a primrose.

Albrecht.— I know them by heart. That's from a plastilina manufactory, therefore an advertisement. And that is from a committee, therefore a competition for a fountain or some other public eyesore. And that's an invitation to an artists' banquet. It will be warm. All the cockchafer larvae will be stirring about there.

Elizabeth.— And you?

Albrecht (*stiffly*).— Well, I think I stir about enough. I was up at the black wall to-day ——

Elizabeth.— Way up there? Where the poacher ——

Albrecht.— Yes, just there. As the pretty verse says:

The hunters think they have him fast.
He sees a way of escape at last,
He plunges o'er the abyss's brim,
For this good God will pardon him.

And even if he didn't do it!

Elizabeth.— It's an awful place.

Albrecht.— Awful? No. Comfortable, pleasant! It needs such perfect courage. Before one's feet, away down in the depths, the cold hell of the thundering waters of the rent and torn mountain gorge, and before one's eyes, away up, shutting off the sky, the colossal wall. And this wall, as smoothly rent as if it had been chiseled. Oh, to hew into this, to make grow out of it the hunters with their dogs, and in the foreground, at the edge of the precipice, the fellow kneeling, his head once more turned round to look at them, and determination in his face — the determination to die. Good Lord, how I should like to see that!

Elizabeth.— Then do it! Make it!

Albrecht (*shrinking into himself*).— I? I shall make nothing more. At least, nothing good for anything.

Elizabeth.— But Albrecht, sometime you must begin to work again.

Albrecht.— Of course. A man must have something to do. I will apply myself to the art crafts and will design salt cellars.

Elizabeth (*sounding him cautiously*).— Haven't you — your friend told me of it — a new work? An unfinished group?

Albrecht (*flaring up*).— Don't say a word about that! That's all up! That's at an end! (*He has sprung up and walks up and down the room.*)

Elizabeth (*obstinately, between her teeth*).— No, that's at the beginning of all. Good, let's take up the art crafts. You can begin at once and design me a center piece for my wedding dinner table.

Albrecht (*stands still where he is*).— You intend to marry?

Elizabeth.— Intend to, what do you mean by that intend to? When I can't sleep nights I often amuse myself thinking how many children I

could have had by this time. Two small girls and two small boys. I have even had a family photograph of us taken.

Albrecht (*breaking out into a hearty laugh*).— If that's so I insist on having one too.

Elizabeth.— Thank God, he laughs, he is aroused from his fit of the blues again.

Albrecht.— Seriously, Elizabeth, tell me, why haven't you ever really cared to?

Elizabeth.— Hm — let us say, why hasn't he — why hasn't the man cared to?

Albrecht.— Is that possible? But you used to be very pretty.

Elizabeth.— Ugh, how bitter! Used to be.

Albrecht.— You please me better as you are to-day. There's more character, better line. But to the common, every-day taste ——

Elizabeth.— The rosy, little-dear type would appeal more.

Albrecht.— He must have been a perfect ass.

Elizabeth.— That's what one man always says of the other.

Albrecht.— What, my lady sister?

Elizabeth (*snapping her fingers*).— That, my dear brother. Besides I know but one sensible* man. That's Scheithammer.

Albrecht.— Sensible — in character. Let us say more accurately, excellent. Excellent through and through.

Elizabeth.— What's the matter with him, then?

Albrecht.— There's nothing the matter with him.

Elizabeth.— What's the reason, then, that one cannot fuse with all this excellence?

Albrecht. — That friendship with him is like marriage without love — yes, what is the cause of this? What is the reason that his outer man has not the smallest capability of expressing his inner man? Not only is he not plastic, but he is absolutely anti-plastic, inartistic. Not because — because he fails to perceive beauty — and fails to believe in beauty.

Elizabeth (*in a low tone*).— Yes, and the children would be just the same.

Albrecht.— What makes you keep talking so continually of children to-day?

Elizabeth.— Well, there are my four, you know. Have you never wished for children?

Albrecht.— I should have to wish for the mother first.

Elizabeth.— And it has never occurred to you to do that?

Albrecht (*after a pause*).— One puts that out of one's mind in Paris. There everything reels — everything is excitement — without joy. There

*In the original ge*scheit*en, making a play on the name *Scheit*hammer.

is no natural hunger of the body any more. One feels it, one revolts against it, and in spite of that does like the rest.

Elizabeth (*remembering*).— Hm — another case of the coercion of environment. What was your real reason for leaving Paris, anyhow? You had your first success there — your famous master ——

Albrecht.— For that very reason. A man must never allow himself to be overgrown by the art of another, I felt, not though it be the greatest. And then there was the stupid hunger for home — to feel my own earth under my feet — my own earth in my fists. That drove me away. But the fever stayed in me for a long time. The insatiability and the miserable feeling that all this keen desire had not yet found its bread.

Elizabeth.— And how was it later?

Albrecht.— Later — later than what?

Elizabeth.— Well, in the winter, in the summer of last year, in the spring?

Albrecht.— In that hot spring ——

Elizabeth (*nods*).— The roses bloomed as early as May.

Albrecht.— And then the hail beat them down in a single night — all of them. (*Breaking off.*) The way of the world. That's the way things go! Battered roses, gashed and ruined stone! What is there for dinner to-day?

Elizabeth.— Why do we hear nothing at all of your friend these days?

Albrecht.— Of whom?

Elizabeth.— Why, of Dr. Tachau. Is he, too, only a speechmaker? An unreliable person?

Albrecht.— As reliable as — as Scheithammer.

Elizabeth.— And yet, not a line from him!

Albrecht.— Perhaps it is my fault.

(*Pause*)

Elizabeth.— Didn't he have a sister? A very pretty sister?

Albrecht (*is silent*).

Elizabeth.— With an unusual name? An old, a harp name?

Albrecht (*is silent*).

Elizabeth.— It's on the tip of my tongue, but I can't get it. What is her name? Please tell me!

Albrecht.— You know what it is.

Elizabeth.— But if I have forgotten it? What is her name?

Albrecht (*with reluctance, curtly and with embarrassment*).— Miriam.

Elizabeth (*who has watched him with every fiber of her being, slowly re-*

peating it).— Miriam. (*She strokes his hair with her hand and then, gently, with the tips of her fingers, his mouth.*) Your lips are as cold as ice, and yet tremble a little. (*Walks away from him, bends over the writing-table and breaks a primrose from the garland.*) Now I have it. (*With a naturalness more feigned than real.*) Tell me, is this Miriam like her name? Haven't you a picture of her?

Albrecht.— No.

Elizabeth.— Can't you draw her?

Albrecht.— She can't be drawn. She can only be modelled.

Elizabeth.— Then model her in words. Go on, Albrecht, boy, show me what you can do and what she is like. Is she young?

Albrecht.— Very young.

Elizabeth.— Well, imagine she is standing out there under the young branches, in the fresh breeze, in the liquid glitter of the sunshine.

Albrecht (*looking out of the window, lost in thought*).— That's the way I saw her the first time. That spring does not grow old. Seen for the first time! So beautiful — and rejoicing that she is beautiful. Graceful and light — from strength and firmness. All her limbs speak — singly, like tones — together, like harmonies. Praying and weeping hands, feet that can dance and laugh — and the exultation of her naked arms thrown high above her head! That body! The terrible splendor of that body!

Elizabeth.— And — and the soul? Has this body a soul too?

Albrecht.—Soul? What is a woman's soul to a man? Consecration, consecration is what it is, a humility that is greater than his strength, which overcomes and overpowers him and throws him on his knees before her, not as one conquered, but as one saved — that is Miriam's soul.

Elizabeth.— Albrecht, she must have loved you very much. Don't say no, don't deny it, don't shut yourself in behind distrust and evasion. Am I so narrow, so poor? (*Pointing to the death mask.*) I was good enough for him, and you will have none of me, none of my help! And you need help; sometime you will have to scream out that which is held in silence within you. And even if your silence is as strong as an archangel and I only a weak thing, there is one time when every man must be more powerful than God. I will strive with him, I will beg no longer, I will wrestle with him for you — and I will not leave you, until you bless me!

Albrecht (*deeply stirred, retreating from her*).— Don't ask it, Elizabeth, I have no blessing, I have only guilt. Don't ask it.

Elizabeth (*not to be refused*).— What was there between you and Miriam?

Albrecht (*between his teeth*).— Nothing — nothing.

Elizabeth.— Did you love her — did you lose her?

Albrecht (*tearing himself free*).— Yes, yes — my God, yes!

Elizabeth (*after a pause*).— Lost! Doesn't she love you any more?

Albrecht.— She? Always.

Elizabeth.— And you?

Albrecht.— Now, for the first I love her.

Elizabeth.— And what hinders you? What prevents you?

Albrecht.— What hinders me? Oh, I made a good job of it. I refused her. Unsuspecting, trusting me, he said: Do you want her? I will give her to you. And I — had no answer. I did not want a wife. Only a mistress. The big lie could not make up little ones. But the recognition began that moment, came to meet me out of the far distance, until it stood before me, out there in the cemetery — as large as death.

Elizabeth.— Refused her — refused her to her brother!

Albrecht.— I stole her — like a beast, like a wolf. I cannot take her underhandedly. To go to him, cowardly, miserably, to speak to him of a change of heart, and say that I have thought better of it; to talk to him and have to look away from him; to know him to be really deceived,— though it costs me my work and more — no! And so I stand here, actually on the edge of the abyss.

Elizabeth (*goes to him, puts her hands on his shoulders. Clearly and simply*).— Jump into it, Albrecht, tell him everything.

Albrecht (*grows pale*).— Everything ——

Elizabeth.— How it was — how it happened. What you have done.

Albrecht.— Can a man tell such things? Can a man listen to them?

Elizabeth.— Perfect courage, Albrecht, perfect courage. What do you fear?

Albrecht.— I fear his pain — and hers. I dare not.

Elizabeth.— Ask her to let you do it.

Albrecht.— Tell him — of her? She cannot bear it.

Elizabeth.— For you — she can.

Albrecht.— And suppose she can bear it, and suppose I go to him, I have no atonement to offer. I cannot repent of it. I am not crushed, not contrite, however it may have robbed my hands of their power. I have nothing, now, absolutely nothing. But if you should lay down before me all life's diamonds and demand for them one breath from that first night, no! I cannot regret it.

Elizabeth.— No regret is necessary. All that is necessary is truth. That is more. Will you?

Albrecht (*after a long pause, during which he is bowed down, straightens himself up to his full height*).— I will.

Elizabeth.— And you will take me with you?

Albrecht.— You? What for?

Elizabeth.— For her sake, for Miriam's sake, to uphold her when you go to her — when you go to him.

Albrecht.— Good. Help me.

Elizabeth (*falls on his neck with a cry of joy*).— Albrecht — brother — dearest — you sheep!

Albrecht.— And you shepherd. (*There is a knock, he starts up.*) Who is that? I can't see any one now.

Elizabeth (*calls out*).— One moment! (*To* ALBRECHT.) Then go somewhere — quickly.

Albrecht (*hurries out the center door*).

Elizabeth.— Come in.

Scheithammer (*comes in. Pointing to the clock*).— Ten minutes of one. Exactly an hour. Have you asked for advice?

Elizabeth.— No. I have asked no one.

Scheithammer.— What have you done, then?

Elizabeth.— What have I done? As I didn't know what to do for myself, I have tried to do something for some one else. And now, everything has grown clear to me.

Scheithammer.— Elizabeth?

Elizabeth.— Mr. Scheithammer, I cannot.

Scheithammer.— Because you think you do not love me enough?

Elizabeth.— Because I — because I — can belong to him only whose wife I would be — even without marriage.

Scheithammer.— That — I do not catch your meaning.

Elizabeth.— You will sometime, Mr. Scheithammer, you will sometime. And then we shall meet each other again. For we have all gone only half way, but we are all on the same way. Only that you are coming down and we are going up. You from godhood to men, and we from manhood to God. (*With averted face she presses his hand once more and hurries out through the center.* SCHEITHAMMER *looks after her, motionless.*)

ACT V

(ALBRECHT'S *studio. A gloomy day. Dark clouds in the sky. In the living-room coverings and rugs are rolled up. Everywhere is noticed the uninhabitable order of a deserted room. The same in the studio. Most of the things are covered over. The large group is completely wrapped up in wet rags.*)

Miriam (*crouches at the foot of this group, asleep. She has on a white garment, and over her neck and shoulders a thin, black scarf. Some one tries*

the door latch. She starts and gets up hurriedly. Her face is pale, her attitude weary, and during the moment that she is alone her eyes look big and disconsolate).

Siegmund (*enters, in spring suit and straw hat*).— You here? So soon again? But, my child! In this cold, heavy air!

Miriam.— I only wanted to look after things.

Siegmund.— What for? Moedl takes care of them.

Miriam.— I don't know whether he will come to-day. He intended to go and take the new position.

Siegmund.— He is right. I can't comprehend why he has hesitated so long. Let's look at your eyes. Sad! Has it been raining? Come, put your things on, and go out with me a little. You mustn't stick in the house so much. You must be out in the air more, out in the fresh air.

Miriam.— I have been out in the garden. It isn't fresh out to-day. It's sultry. There's a heavy thunder storm coming. That's what makes one so tired. I'd like to sleep all the time. You know I can't endure spring.

Siegmund.— Spring can't endure spring. What is it that has made my little frog sick? It doesn't croak any more, it doesn't hop any more? Can't the frog speak?

Miriam (*with lowered eyelips*).— Every one has times like this ——

Siegmund.— And I am to go away now? I am to leave you alone now? I cannot make up my mind to it—to this long journey to a distant country.

Miriam.— But your mind has already been made up.

Siegmund.— Because you urge me — because you are urging me ——

Miriam.— And because you yourself recognize that things cannot go on as they are. You are doing only what you have to do, and you have no joy in doing it, and every day seems like a year.

Siegmund.— And who has made this hole in life? So that everything has been spoiled and embittered? Who? To think that any one should allow such a perfect piece of luck to be twisted out of his hands! That he should throw the commission down Reder's throat. Of course! After him Reder was the only one to be taken into consideration. *Faiseur! Bandinelli!* And Michael Angelo sits by the jam pot and wipes away his pious tears with a cotton handkerchief! (*Looking into* MIRIAM'S *troubled face.*) Enough of that, I'll be quiet now. One must get to the end sometime — the end of everything — do you hear? Good, I will travel. It may be that it is well to get out of the treadmill once in a while. Away from one's regular table at the restaurant and from one's esteemed neighbor. After all, one's view of the world is always the same because one is always served by the same waiter.

Miriam (*who has seated herself*).— And you have found such a good place for me to stay.

Siegmund.— Yes — splendid people. Excellent ladies. Well bred and cultivated and musical. But, Miriam, they all look like coffee pots. What sort of a place is that for you? You are not accustomed to a numbered life. From their clothes up. The apron predominates in their clothes. How will that seem to you?

Miriam — I shall fit into it. A little more or a little less — that is of no consequence. No one can live just as he would like.

Siegmund (*regarding her*).— Shall I take you with me? Put you in my vest pocket and take you along?

Miriam.— It can't be done.

Siegmund.— After all, everything can be done. If you would like it. Wouldn't you like it?

Miriam (*shakes her head*).

Siegmund.— Why not?

Miriam (*is silent*).

Siegmund (*drawing her to him*).— What is going on in you, my child? Can't you have confidence in me? I am as old again as you are. I have lived through as much again as you have. Much that seems to you endless and insurmountable, I have learned to reduce to its natural dimensions. There is nothing that is more than life size. There are only everyday things. And the highest psychology is the greatest tolerance.

Miriam (*frees herself from him*).— Nobody has that.

Siegmund (*distressed*).— Why are you so hard to me? Why can't I satisfy you? Is it possible to pain people by being kind to them?

Miriam.— I wonder — I often ask myself if it is ——

Siegmund.— I must try some other way round for a time. I must give you to strange people. They won't read your wishes from your eyes as I do. Perhaps for that very reason you will prefer them to me.

Miriam (*falls on his neck*).— But Sieg! Poor, good Sieg! Prefer them to you! I ought not — I cannot possibly do that. I have nothing but you. And if I hurt you, how I must hurt myself first. Only I am so stupid. Only I am so tired. So tired of people. And the world is so queer, and everything is different from what one imagined it was going to be.

Siegmund.— Do you feel that, too, so soon — the thing in itself? Does Jack think he is going to get a golden apple and then find it is an iron hedgehog? I must go, my little student of the world. In half an hour I'll be back again. I am only going to the coffee pots. To order you a little bed and a little room and to bring you your favorite red roses back with me. What makes you look like that?

Miriam.— Nothing. A little bed and a little room,— it sounds as if it were from an old song.

Moedl (*enters, a large package under his arm*).— God be wid yous!

Siegmund.— Good day, Moedl. This is quite unexpected. How does this happen?

Moedl (*pointing to the package*).— I'm afther findin' something new — a whole kiver iv gutta-percha ——

Siegmund (*shrugs his shoulders*).— For weeks all these apparatuses for saving the thing. Make a Roman Catholic Good Friday cross over it, Moedl. I did it long ago. See you later! (*He goes out.*)

Moedl (*calling after him*).— Ye cud aisy make wan, doctor. Hev ye been lookin' after thim things, sure Miss Marie, eh — Miss Mira? Hev ye dampened th' rags?

Miriam.— Yes,— as well as it can be done. But, Moedl, it's all no use. We can't keep it. The fissure in the back grows bigger and bigger. And I have found three new ones. It won't last one week longer.

Moedl (*throws his package on the floor, angrily*).— Jasus, Jasus, sure 'tis enough t' drive a man crazy! What wi' th' hotness, and seein' nawthin' iv him, hearin' nawthin' iv him, and him niver aven answerin' me letter!

Miriam.— Have you written to him?

Moedl.— An' why not, sure?

Miriam.— But you didn't say anything about me?

Moedl.— Ach no! What put that in your head? I wudden't be after doin' annything like that. Well, if he'll on'y just snort whin he comes back. An' aftherwards — what comes aftherwards? Th' whole wurruk's gone, an' nawthin' here but a gr-reat lump iv dirt.

Miriam (*has slowly slid down onto the steps, her face on her knees, and it is seen that she is weeping*).

Moedl (*looks at her sideways, scratches his head and says to himself*).— Ah, little gir-rl, little gir-rl, what am I t' do wid ye? (*He sits down near her on the step above the one she is on and talks soothingly to her*). Listen t' me, Miss Maria — 'tis th' way iv things, an' there's nawthin' t' be done about it. An' this smother of frettin' — don't be swallyin' so much iv it, spit it out an' sind it skytin', an' bad cess to 't.

Miriam (*with a sad smile*).— But it always comes back home again. (*She wipes away her tears and regains her composure*). Why are you here again? Didn't you take the place?

Moedl.— No. I cudden't bring meself t' do it. You know, whin wan's used t' Mister Herkner — it's rough he was, an' he wud scould ontil he fair roared — but thin there was somethin' to him, stren'th an' sap an' th' ithers do be all like blatherin' pint jugs to him. Lord! I'll just be waitin'

wanst more ontil the fir-rst. Bether be misthress t' Misther King th'n madam wife t' Mounseer Cook.

Miriam (*with closed eyes, breathing more regularly*).— Go on talking Moedl — go on. It does me good to hear you.

Moedl (*laughs*).— Sure an' ye c'n hev all ye want iv that kind iv baby talk. It's me that was always the big dog f'r th' little gir-rl. Begorrah, I niver so much as dhramed iv this frindship whin I was cartin' manure about at home at th' farm.

Miriam.— You are from Steinkirchen, too?

Moedl.— Faix, an' 'tis maybe on'y a half hour from there —Cloisterweil.

Miriam.— Is there a cloister there?

Moedl.— Sure, is there — belongin' t' th' Salesians.

Miriam.— I would like to go there.

Moedl.—Och, blathers!

Miriam.— Only I couldn't confess.

Moedl.— What wan knoweth not 'll not make wan hot. Don't be gettin' anny notion iv th' cloister into y'r head. Ye c'n git twinty min, yit, an' bedad, I'll be th' fir-rst wan, this minyit—whisht, whisht — I heven't said annything — don't thrimble so!

Miriam (*has risen*).— O Moedl, you won't even take another position and you can think (*sits down on the couch and looks over at the myrtle bushes*). We have forgotten those, they are all withered and dried up. Nothing there but the old book. . Give it to me, Moedl.

Moedl (*who has followed her, gives her the Bible*).— Sure, they'll be bloomin' agin, all right! Ye cudden't belave th' life a plant like that does be hevin' in it!

Miriam (*has opened the book*).— Here is still the little twig — in the Song of Songs. (*She reads a little while silently, until involuntarily her lips begin to move and she says the words softly as she reads.*) 'By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.' (*She lies back, burying her head in the pillows, and holding the open Bible to her breast.*) Found him not!

Moedl (*draws up a chair for himself near her*).— Now listen to' me, Miss Maria. I was wantin' t' tell ye: he'll come back agin. He'll not be lettin' thim things be rooned, his things I mane, thim that he's afther makin' himself. He didn't larn that, didn't larn it in the schools. An' what wan niver larned wan can't f'rgit. Figurin' an' writin' — thim, och, yis! But niver brathin'. Just listen t' me, he'll be comin' back agin.

Miriam (*with closed eyes*).— Why is it so dark all of a sudden?

Moedl.— 'Tis th' thunder storm. 'Tis good it 'll be t' hev it come. I hev been feelin' it all day long.

Miriam.— And I felt it all night, too.

Moedl.— Hev ye been after sittin' up agin? Hev ye been after countin' the stars agin? D' ye know what? Ye better be sleepin' a bit. Some wan'll know be y'r eyes how ye do be lyin' there at night.

Miriam (*softly*).— Sing something, Moedl.

Moedl.— But what'll I be singin! (*He hums in a low tone.*)

Good ar-re they, whin they're asleep,
That's thrue iv all min.
Bad ar-re they, whin they're awake,
Whin dhrunk, sure, they're worse thin!

Miriam.— But I don't like that.

Moedl.— Bedad, thin' here's something else.

The blackbird, it pipes, sure,
In th' morn, afore fure.
Th' colleen, she knows it, sure,
An' waits at th' dure ——

(*He continues humming to himself for awhile.*)

Miriam (*lies perfectly still*).

Moedl (*bends over her a little lower*).— She's sleepin', sure. (*He carefully lifts her feet up on the couch and arranges her dress. Meditatively.*)— It's a nate little gir-rl, she is — it's a pity, so 'tis! (*He pulls out his leather purse, counts his money, and sniffs vigorously at the amount.*) It'll not be lastin' much longer — ontil th' fir-rst, maybe! (*Takes his pipe out of his breast pocket, lights it, and calmly and slowly puffs away at it, blowing the smoke off in front of him. The door is softly opened.*)

Albrecht (*stands in the doorway*).

Moedl (*turns his head toward him at once. A sly, contented smile spreads over his face. In a low tone*).— Well, how's yourself, Misther Herkner? (*He rises and goes toward him, on tiptoe. With his thumb pointing over his shoulder, back at* MIRIAM.) She's just afther fallin' asleep.

Albrecht.— How is she?

Moedl.— Ai — ai!

Albrecht (*after he has regarded her for awhile with emotion, turning again to* MOEDL).— You are not a bit surprised?

Moedl.— That ye're afther comin' back here agin? No. I thought ye'd come.

Albrecht.— What have you been doing all this time?

Moedl.— It's waitin' I've been — and she does be gettin' tired.

Albrecht (*pointing toward the studio*).— And in there?

Moedl.— It'll niver hold t'gither. But 'tis no fau't iv mine.

Albrecht.— Go out in the garden, Moedl. A lady is waiting there, my sister. You may ask her to come in.

Moedl (*opens his eyes very wide and screws up his mouth in disapproval; he says nothing, however, and goes out*).

Albrecht (*waits until he has closed the door, then makes a passionate movement toward* MIRIAM, *but restrains himself.*— Now, I can let you sleep, too. (*He glances into the studio.*) Everything as it was — and nothing as it was — any more. The Lucifer must go. He takes too much light.

Elizabeth (*comes in, in a black traveling gown*).

Albrecht (*takes her by the hand and leads her nearer to* MIRIAM).— Here she is, look at her.

Elizabeth.— Oh, how beautiful — and how sad!

Albrecht (*pointing to his room*).— I would like you to wait in there until I call you. For first I must have spoken to her alone.

Elizabeth.— Albrecht, I am afraid she will not be able to stand it.

Albrecht.— Yes, she will. (*Pointing to the group.*) For that.

Elizabeth.— I am so anxious, Albrecht.

Albrecht.— I no longer am. (ELIZABETH *goes into* ALBRECHT'S *room. He closes the door behind her, sits down on the chair near* MIRIAM, *gently takes from her the Bible lying on her breast, and reads from the page at which it is open. He holds the book in his left hand, while he gently pushes his right arm under her neck.*)

Miriam (*moves a little*).

Albrecht (*beginning in a low tone*).— 'Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.'

Miriam (*opens her eyes, and listens without moving*).

Albrecht.— 'Thy love is strong as death, its coals are coals of fire which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.' (*He puts the Bible down on the harmonium and bends over* MIRIAM.) That is it.

Miriam (*remains motionless*).

Albrecht.— I am here again, Miriam. And it is none of it true, none of what I wrote you. About having to give up, to make an end and to atone. None of it is true. And also none of what you answered: that you agreed with me. There is no last time for such a first time as we have lived through. A finite night such as that ends only in an infinite day.

Miriam (*slowly raises herself*).

Albrecht—And now, Miriam, your body is to have your head on it,

your soul, to look out of your face. I have learned to understand them. I can model them. Will you help me, once again?

Miriam.— But it can never be the same.

Albrecht.— No, not the same. And for that reason I have come to you. Let me —— (*He falters.*)

Miriam (*divining*).— What?

Albrecht.— Let me — go to your brother. Let me say to him, I have done this — I confess it — forgive me.

Miriam (*collapses as if struck by an arrow*).— Oh, dear! Oh, dear! You want to say to him—inflict that upon him—that I and you—No, no, I will not have it.

Albrecht.— Miriam, I must be able to look him in the eyes again, that I may be able to hold you in my arms again. Give me my freedom again — the freedom to scorn everything and fear nothing.

Miriam (*in a lower tone, the tears running down her face*).— If you had only stayed away. If you had only never come back. Then I should have died, perished in a corner — that's the way it happens, hundreds of times — no one need have known anything about it. But to stand before him like this, so wretched, so faithless, Albrecht, in my happiness, I would have run with you naked over the whole earth — but in my misery ——

Albrecht.— But are you alone? Am I not with you?

Miriam.— You! You! But he? What do I care about you now? You have conquered — and he is to go to destruction because of it?

Albrecht.— He shall not.

Miriam.— I will go to him, I will protect him! I will forget you, so that I shall no longer know you if you stand before me, I will be silent about it before him all my life long, silently suffer — isn't that enough?

Albrecht.— And we shall remain prisoners — you and I — and he. And yours and my work will never be completed. And the world will stay dark, and you will have brought down no stars for yourself by your prayers. (*He pulls the old letter out of his pocket.*) Miriam! Will you not allow me to bring about the fulfilment of the dead man's promise? 'Deliverance from life's struggle in life's work.' Won't you deliver me?

Miriam (*sinks down. After a long pause*).— Well go — go to him. But I tell you, you will not finish your work — you will destroy it.

Albrecht.— Why, Miriam?

Miriam.— He will not stand it — he will not forgive it. And when this happens to him — to whom shall I belong? (*She has been looking out of the window.*) There he comes, Albrecht, there he comes. Roses in his hand — he wanted to bring them to me! And you mean, at once ——

Albrecht (*nods*).— Yes.

Miriam.— Oh, wait only one day — only one hour ——

Albrecht.— Then it will be too late.

Miriam (*lets her head fall on her breast*).— Then do it at once. (*She starts toward the door into the hall.*)

Albrecht.— No, Miriam, not there. You must not stay alone. I have brought my sister with me, she is waiting for you in there. She is good and true. She will not trouble you. (*Opens the door.*) Elizabeth!

Elizabeth (*steps into the doorway*).

Albrecht.— Now comes dead earnest! Here, take her and watch over her and hold her brow as she walks behind the cross.

Elizabeth (*very timidly*).— My Miriam ——

Miriam (*raises her eyes to* ELIZABETH'S *for a moment and lowers them again immediately*).

Elizabeth (*puts her arm around* MIRIAM'S *shoulder and draws her gently with her into the room*).

Albrecht (*draws the studio curtains together, then, taking long teps walks over to the door into the hall, opens it and remains standing in it until* SIEGMUND *comes by*).— Good afternoon, Sieg.

Siegmund (*completely taken by surprise*).— Albrecht! Well, what won't happen! So you're back again, after all!

Albrecht.— I have just arrived. Won't you come in?

Siegmund (*hesitates. He is friendly, but there is not the old heartiness in his tone.*) Later. After a railroad journey no man shall disturb another in the holy action of washing his hands.

Albrecht.— Pshaw, Sieg, what nonsense is this? Won't you come in?

Siegmund.— Are you in such a hurry?

Albrecht.—Yes. Until I have talked with you I can't start to do anything at all.

Siegmund (*coming in*).— I am indeed surprised; but if you so urgently desire it — here is what you wish. (*He sits down.*) What would you like to know?

Albrecht.— There's nothing at all that I would like to know.

Siegmund.— I have, however, a few pleasant bits of news. Reder has the commission for the museum. He is making a gigantic allegory — all of guardsmen with angels' wings. In this year's exhibition he is to have twelve or fifteen immortal works. You have, of course, been stricken off the lists. They say of you, that you have broken your arm ——

Albrecht.— Two, three arms.

Siegmund.— And besides, that you will never work any more.

Albrecht (*smiling*).— That is to say, I have gone completely to the dogs. Very good. Is that all?

Siegmund.— Isn't it enough? These are a few nice little rough stones.

Albrecht.— We will roll them all away again.

Siegmund.— We?

Albrecht.— Yes, of course, we.

Siegmund.— I regret that you will have to leave my help out of the question. In one week, at the latest, I, at last, start out on the journey round the world that I have been planning. I do not yet know how long I shall be gone, but at all events it will be much too long for me to enter into any of your plans.

Albrecht.— I did not mean it that way. I did not think of such a thing as your writing articles or running your feet off for me. I want to regain the old intimate relation with you, and that would extend even beyond the North Pole.

Siegmund (*after a short pause*).— I want to tell you something, Albrecht. I don't belong to those people who can glue up a split in a moment. Natures like mine which are not strong enough to feel themselves founded on their own worth, live in the worth of those they love. Therefore you might have done anything to me,— but not to yourself. My Albrecht Herkner has become the son of John Herkner. What do I care for him? He may be a very respectable man, this Herkner Junior, with clean linen and conventional manners. But the man who is so well dressed will never again mould such a magnificent, stark naked pair of human beings as that one in there which has gone to ruin.

Albrecht.— It's because of this particular pair of human beings that I have returned. Because of the dead and the living. Because of Miriam and me.

Siegmund (*gloomily*).— Miriam? What has Miriam to do with you? What business of yours is Miriam?

Albrecht.— I would like, to-day, to answer the question you asked me two months ago.

Siegmund (*interrupting him*).— You have answered it already.

Albrecht.—I know it. By my silence, with a no. To-day, I beg you to be allowed to say yes.

Siegmund (*rises*).— How can you believe that I shall attribute any significance at all to this yes? To this fake tree that suddenly shoots up before my eyes? Or, perhaps, this is a stirring of magnanimity, of compassion, because I was incautious enough to admit to you that she — I thank you for this. And I thank you still more for your former no. Only the infatuation due to my admiration for you could have drawn me into that question, drawn me into such incredible folly! An artist and a child! How could they belong together!

Albrecht.—It is they, and they only, who do belong together. Only a child is as capable of growth, as capable of being everything that it is not as he.

Siegmund.— Dear Albrecht, that is too unsound for me. I have lived through it in you. I do not give my sister away to any such processes of growth. For them a man takes a mistress, not a wife.

Albrecht.— How can a woman be a man's mistress without becoming his wife? How can she be a man's wife who has not been his mistress? All heavenly fire is stolen. The only question is whether it will burn its way back to the sun, or take to making charcoal in the ground and one be smothered by the smoke.

Siegmund.— Very pretty, very superior; much too pretty, much too superior. And there is something wrong with it, as there is with every "too." We can't arrange these little actualities transcendentally. In order to be able to live we must stay within bounds. We must exclude ourselves from those things which we concede as lawful for others. Of course there comes at some time to every respectable woman the lust of the prostitute, and to every prostitute the longing to be a respectable woman. Are we because of that to take them walking together? That must not be. Of course, I know what grandeur is manifested in the thunder storm out there, in the lightning and thunder, but because I do am I to place myself at its mercy on the top of a rock? That's exactly what one must not do. But let us have no riddles. Let us have no impenetrable depths. I want for Miriam a straightforward, clean affair, a matrimonial feeling, with a wreath and a veil. Nothing more, but also nothing less.

Albrecht.— And she? Do you know what she desires?

Siegmund.— As long as she remains under my command —as long as I am her fate ——

Albrecht.— But you are not her fate, and it is not possible, with your nature, for you ever to be. Just so far as the knowledge of your intellectual power is beyond her, so deep is her being rooted in a primeval world.

Siegmund.— Suffering enough, if I understand you aright. But she shall not run into destruction because of it.

Albrecht.— Only the suffering which drives one to the utmost is the true suffering—and sometime every one must dare to run into destruction. To throw oneself in for life or death. She has dared, and to-day I am at the point of it. (*He turns away and it is seen that he breathes heavily, and rubs his hand over his forehead several times.*)

Siegmund.— Tell me, Albrecht, what are we disputing over? What will we arrive at, if we judge everything from a height from which, after all, nothing more is to be seen? What do you ask of me? Why do you come to me? Take her at once, intoxicate her, seduce her, make her

your mistress, how do I know what, your model ——

Albrecht (*turns toward him*).

Siegmund.— For God's sake, Albrecht, don't speak! What is it that is in your eyes?

Albrecht.— That I have done it!

Siegmund (*stares at him with a white face*).—What do you say? I — don't hear you. That you have done it?

Albrecht (*only bows his head*).

Siegmund (*continues to stare at him immovably, then smiles a little*).— You did that, Albrecht, did that? (*Takes off his eye-glasses and hides his eyes in his hand. After a long pause, he looks up again and says in a low tone.*) Am I still alive? (*Breaking out and going up to* ALBRECHT *with clenched fists.*) Is the man still alive?

Albrecht (*who until this moment has stood with deeply bowed head, now draws himself up and looks him in the eyes*).

Siegmund (*bursts into bitter laughter and lets his clenched hands fall*).— What am I going to do? Against him? I am too weak! He could strangle me with one finger! God in heaven, to be able, for once, to kill and then to be dead myself! (*He throws himself on a chair, shaking with tearless sobs.*)

Albrecht (*who has regained his perfect calm, steps up to him*).—I shall not defend myself!

Siegmund.— Miriam, where is Miriam? I want to see Miriam. Now, now I begin to see! And that thing in there — which I was not allowed to see — that is she — naked from head to feet, naked and on fire like a girl from the streets; and I, fool that I am, stand before her stirred to my heart. I want to see her — I want to put them together. (*He has sprung up and now rushes toward the door.*)

Albrecht (*blocks his way*).— She is not upstairs — and you shall not see her now. Say to me what you have to say — do to me what you wish— I will let nothing happen to her.

Siegmund.— You will let nothing happen to her? What more can happen to her? (*He takes the roses from the table, tears them to pieces, strips off the leaves and throws them at* ALBRECHT'S *feet.*) There, there, and there— and you will let nothing happen to her.

Albrecht.— If I had not done it to you, Sieg, I could defend it better, and if it were not she, you would comprehend it sooner.

Siegmund (*bitterly, to himself*).— So, that's what you have done to me! To have struck me dead on the spot, Albrecht, would have been more merciful. Why didn't it occur to you to do that, too? But to be so poisoned, clear in to the bone — so that one must go about as a cripple — and not even to have lost one's limbs with honor — no, to have them

eaten away by leprosy — not a misfortune that excites respect — one that excites disgust — a tragedy without the dignity of tragedy. And in conclusion, the satirical drama of this forced marriage, placing her hand in one which has so befouled me, because in no other way can he have possession of her, because he needs the slavish service of her naked body — no. And until I am dead, no. Where is Miriam? Bring her to me, or I'll scream so loud that she will hear me, wherever you may have hidden her.

Albrecht.— She is with my sister.

Siegmund.— Indeed? Does she too know it by now? Let us post it at once on the billboards! Do you know it, Reder? The beautiful Miriam has posed as a model for Herkner. And how? You must see sometime for yourself. And her brother? Oh, he doesn't care! He gives her to him for that purpose. (*Going up to* ALBRECHT *in a final outburst of mad rage against him.*) You dog! What did you pay her for it? What did you pay her?

Albrecht (*catches his hand, as it is raised to strike him, by the wrist. Quietly*).— Don't do it, Siegmund. Not because I want to spare myself anything. But that you may not have too much to regret before her. (*Lets him go*).

Siegmund (*reels*).

Albrecht (*catches him in his arms and holds him*).— We suffer — but each one for himself. Miriam suffers with both of us. And the most suffering should, I think, be most pardoned.

Siegmund (*freeing himself from him*).— Let — let me alone. And now, call her. Spare her — yes. I will. And you can stay here. Yes, yes, yes. As guardian. But now, call her.

Albrecht (*goes to the door of his room and opens it*).— Miriam.

Miriam (*appears in the doorway with* ELIZABETH. *She clings fast to her and will not let her go*).

Elizabeth (*gently but forcibly frees herself from her and goes back into the room. The door remains open*).

Miriam (*goes up to her brother with faltering steps and remains standing there, her head bowed low*).

Siegmund (*looks at her long and then turns away overpowered by unspeakable agony*).

Miriam (*hardly audibly*).— Say something, Sieg — say something — have pity.

Siegmund (*turns to her again, apparently calm, and almost business like*). — Yes, it will be well to talk about what is to be done now. Albrecht Herkner has just informed me that you have been his mistress, and that

now, contrary to his former intentions, he wishes to marry you. What have you to say to this?

Miriam (*tonelessly*).— I never wished it.

Siegmund.— Good! I understand. Under certain conditions you would have been contented, too, to remain only his mistress. Probably for the sake of the work you have so faithfully taken care of, which he cannot finish without your service as model. And for the sake of which he has also decided to give me the information he has. That's it — isn't it?

Miriam (*pale*).— I — I don't know.

Albrecht (*vigorously*).— No. That is not it.

Siegmund.— Who will prove that to me? Not your no, nor your yes. Who knows what it is? Not you, and not she, and no one. Shall I make you his wife, Miriam? What do I gain by that? What do you gain by it? As it is, you will be miserable from to-day on — with me. And as it is, you will be miserable in a year — if he does not — but then I shall no longer be here for you to come to. And as to what they call the shame — my inner shame as a man is much greater than your outward shame as a woman. That I will take upon myself. It has broken me down. But I am not yet so weak that I cannot take the whole little pile of calamity in my arms and carry it away with me. Far, far away, where we have no friends. He has had no good intentions toward you. I know that my intentions toward you are good — even to-day.

Miriam.— Away — far away.

Siegmund (*stretching out his hands toward her*).— Come with me, Miriam. You will never hear a hard word from me — not even an unspoken one. And all that I have said to him I will beg your pardon for. But come with me, don't forsake me after you have taken everything from me, even myself. And let there be a separation at any price! Be free at last and far away from an influence which I know as well as you. See whether you can't forget, whether he won't forget — over a lost work, over long, empty years. And as I say to him here, that I shall try everything to part you from him, I also promise you some day to let you go whither you will. When I know that I cannot keep you.

Miriam.— Forsake — you — him ——

Siegmund.— But, Miriam, if you don't go with me, if you can't decide, I will leave you here — here on this spot, just as you are, as much dressed or as naked as you like,— and I — that will no longer be any concern of yours.

Miriam.— No longer my — I know — I know! (*Bursting out desperately and throwing herself in* ALBRECHT'S *arms.*) What shall I do? O Albrecht, what shall I do?

Albrecht (*holds her fast in his arms, his face bent low over her head. Finally*).— Go with your brother, Miriam. You must not forsake him — you must not lose him. And he will bring you back to me. For I shall wait for you. However long it may be, however lonely it may be, I shall wait for you.

Miriam.— Wait — you?

Albrecht.— Won't you? Now, you see. (*He leads her to* SIEGMUND.) Here she is.

Siegmund (*draws her quickly to him. After a pause*).— We will leave this house this evening. Then you will hear nothing more of her. I cannot give you my hand. Not in farewell, and not with the thought of meeting again. But for the sake of this moment I shall try —— (*His voice breaks, he quickly draws* MIRIAM *out with him; from the door she throws a last glance back to* ALBRECHT, *who bends his head towards her with a proud and quiet smile. The door closes, he stands alone. Outside it has grown light. The storm has passed over. Evening light.*)

Elizabeth (*steps quietly into the doorway and then goes up to her brother*).—Albrecht.

Albrecht (*waking from his absorption*).— Here I am. What now, Elizabeth? Wreckage.

Elizabeth.— And no hope?

Albrecht (*drawing himself up to his full height*).— Hope — yes. Destruction without — hope within. And what am I lamenting over? I have her. I hold her. Hold her faster than ever. She will come back to me. I shall work. Work like the servant of the master I was. And not grow weary of the mystery and reality of the world, of the body and spirit of God. Now I understand, father — not a work — the work of a whole life alone can be it. Will you stay with me a while longer, Elizabeth?

Elizabeth.— And mother?

Albrecht.— With you.

Elizabeth.— Then yes, Albrecht.

Albrecht (*looking deep into her eyes*).— You have his look — up from the depths of you. To-day I find what it must be. Shall we begin at once? In there are a few white garments. Put on one of them. Do your hair quite low on your neck. Do you understand?

Elizabeth.— Yes, Albrecht. (*Goes into the dressing-room.*)

Albrecht (*draws back the curtain of the studio, goes up the steps and changes his coat for a working blouse. There is a knock.*)

Albrecht.— *Come in.*

Moedl (*with a wooden trough of fresh clay under his arm, looks around a little embarrassed*).— Is it all right?

Albrecht.— Come on. Have you brought clay so soon? That's sensible. Is it the right kind? Bring it here. We will begin at the beginning at once.

Moedl (*springs up the steps enthusiastically and is about to take the rags off the group*).

Albrecht (*holding him back*).— Stop, Moedl, not that. I don't want to see that again. Nothing can be patched up. We'll let that fall to pieces or we'll break it up if it's in our way.

Moedl (*rigid, with quivering lips*).— Misther Herkner — but, Misther Herkner ——

Albrecht.— Well, what is it? Moedl! You silly fellow! It looks to me as if you — old woman! Wipe your eyes. And now pay attention. Do you know the mountain behind the cemetery of St. John's Church? Yes? We are going to blast a hole in it — a mighty, pitch-black hole — and there we will put it up. The new one I mean.

Elizabeth (*appears in the doorway. She is dressed in a simple Greek garment, her hair arranged as* ALBRECHT *has desired*).

Albrecht (*glance falls on her at once*).— And it will look like this. (*He goes down to her.*) Let's look at you. Yes, it will be like this. Growing up out of the darkness behind his grave, rising with upturned glance, not his finite, but his eternal portrait — the image of his soul! Come, Elizabeth! (*He takes her hand and leads her up the steps.*)

THE DAWN

By Francis Viele-Griffin

Translated by Amelia von Ende

Clear and pale breaks the day.
In the folds of the hills it begins to gleam,
And brushes the earth and all it may bear
With its kisses' frail and tender beam —
For the day is timid and doth not dare;
And the day itself is full of fear,
When it sends such a timorous courier
That on the door sill holds its breath.
Who knows whether it bring life or death?
Full of Fear is the day.

But the blushing goddess of dawn looms forth
Like one who fears and yet doth dare,
And rising to her slender height
She opens the shutters to the glare
Of the coming morning light.
And the veils behind her move and shift,
And her nymphs plunge through a smiling rift,
And fall in line
And the horizon entwine
East, south, west, north:
Like the song of a lyre the day bursts forth.